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HOWARD UNIVERSITY STUDIES IN URBAN SOCIOLOGY

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WILLIAM H. JONES, *Editor*

## ANNOUNCEMENT

Present tendencies and trends indicate that the future habitat of the Negro population will be the city. This will mean an increase in the number of problems of racial and cultural contacts, accommodation, assimilation, and social control. The solutions to these problems will have to be reached through scientific investigation. Sociologists are now developing objective methods for carrying on dispassionate studies of human nature and social life.

The sociological series of which this study is the beginning will be confined to carefully conducted surveys of various aspects of the social life of Negroes in large urban centers. The editor takes this opportunity to announce the following studies which are to appear in the near future:

*The Housing of Negroes in Washington, D.C.:  
A Study in Human Ecology*  
By WILLIAM H. JONES

*Negro-White Contacts in Washington, D.C.*  
By WILLIAM H. JONES and DAMON P. YOUNG

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RECREATION AND AMUSEMENT  
AMONG  
NEGROES IN WASHINGTON, D.C.



# **RECREATION AND AMUSE- MENT AMONG NEGROES IN WASHINGTON, D.C.**

*A Sociological Analysis of the Negro  
in an Urban Environment*

*By*  
**WILLIAM H. JONES**  
Professor of Sociology in  
Howard University



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DEDICATED  
TO ALL MOVEMENTS DESIGNED TO-  
IMPROVE THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE  
NEGRO CITY-DWELLER



## P R E F A C E

SO FAR AS THE AUTHOR IS AWARE, the subject of leisure-time activities has never been systematically treated in the light of the concepts and methods of analysis of modern scientific sociology. In view, however, of the tremendous advancement which is now being made in the understanding of human nature and social life, evidenced by such recent studies as *The Gang* by Frederick M. Thrasher, *The Hobo* by Nels Anderson, and *Family Disorganization* by Ernest R. Mowrer, scientific technique should, by all means, be applied to what is one of the most significant fields of human behavior—the field of leisure-time activity.

This study, therefore, attempts to bring to the attention of students of social science a small aspect of this vast field of research. It is the result of a survey which was begun in the Spring of 1925 with the assistance of students in the class in Social Pathology. The study was undertaken at the request of Miss Dorothy H .Allen, who was at that time Executive Secretary of the Juvenile Protective Association of Washington, D.C. The primary motive back of the survey was a desire to discover some of the social forces and factors which are powerful determinants of the cultural aspects of Negro life in Washington. It is the first of a series of studies

to be conducted by the Department of Sociology at Howard University, which will attempt to investigate Negro behavior in the urban environment

The purpose of this study is to present, in an objective and candid manner, a description and interpretation of the recreational and amusement aspects of Negro life in the National Capital. It makes neither an apology nor an appeal, but merely attempts to state clearly the facts and, to some extent, analyze these facts. The two factors which are emphasized are human behavior and external physical characteristics, i.e., recreational facilities. To the sociologists, behavior and forms of interstimulation are of vastly greater importance than the physical aspects of institutions.

A strictly systematic and formal method of collecting data was used. Visits were made for a period of twenty-six months to the various centers of recreation and amusement by a number of persons who were assisting in the investigation, and who, in many instances, participated in the life and activities which they were attempting to study. A large number of persons were consulted, and much information was obtained in this manner. One investigator who happened to be playing in a dance orchestra rendered invaluable service in securing information about the dance halls and cabarets, since he was able to get many "inside facts." The author attempted to visit as many of the places of amusement as possible in order to confirm data brought in by the staff of investigators and to make further observations.

Schedules were not used in connection with the study of behavior. The reactions, attitudes, and sentiments were studied by observation and consultation. One investigator spent considerable time in the poolrooms, conversing with the patrons, listening to their conversations, and observing their conduct. Another investigator attempted to attend white places of amusement, particularly the theatres and public halls, in order to determine the rigidity of the barrier against Negro encroachment on white life in relation to leisure-time activities. An interesting set of attitudes was reported. On one occasion, he appeared in his military regalia, wearing the ornaments with which he had been decorated "over-seas," but all of this brought no favorable response from the ticket agent who began to shake his head "no" as soon as he saw him at a distance. His total findings confirmed the much-repeated statement that "in Washington, a black man cannot get into the white man's social life." Contacts of this sort between the two races in Washington are very much restricted by custom, tradition, and legislation. Hence, they can hardly be said to exist.

Practically the only existing publications relating to this study are the reports of the Department of Playgrounds of the District of Columbia. From these reports some of the statistical data were secured. The sociological significance of photographic studies became more apparent as the investigation progressed. One interesting fact which came to light during the progress

of this study was that only a small part of the play-life of Negroes in Washington is organized. Most of their leisure time is spent in disorganized and undirected activity. Hence, there was discovered a wide-spread tendency to seek stimulation and excitement in indefinite ways.

For the sake of convenience this study has been divided into four parts: Part I, Non-Commercialized Recreation; Part II, Commercialized Recreation; Part III, Some Behavior Sequences of Inadequate Recreation and Amusement Facilities; Part IV, Conclusions.

The author wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to the large number of individuals and social agencies that helped make this study possible. Those who are familiar with the points of view embraced in the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago will at once discern the influences of Professors Faris, Park, Burgess, and Bernard. Special acknowledgement must be made also to the staffs of the Juvenile Protective Association, Juvenile Court, Municipal Department of Education, Department of Playgrounds, Young Men's Christian Association, and Young Women's Christian Association. The author also acknowledges his indebtedness to his wife, who helped with the collection and compilation of the material and who read the entire manuscript. Finally, the author wishes to express his indebtedness to Mr. Elijah H. Fitchett, formerly a graduate student in Sociology in Howard University, for the valuable service which he rendered in assisting

with the collection of the material and with many of the mechanical phases of the study.

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Atlantic Monthly Co.; Henry Holt Co.; Macmillan Co.; Thomas Y. Crowell Co.; *Popular Science Monthly*; *Scientific Monthly*; Yale University Press; University of Chicago Press.

It is the author's hope that this study will result in the appearance of other volumes, which will present the sociology of leisure time in its relations to the problems of human nature.

WILLIAM H. JONES.

Howard University,  
Washington, D.C.,  
July 28, 1927.



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## *I N T R O D U C T I O N*

THE SOCIAL FORCES which mold human nature in the city are complex and interrelated. The problems which confront the social worker and the scientific student of society must be interpreted in terms of both the hereditary impulses of the individuals who make up the social group and the channels of the social environment which give these impulses an opportunity for expression. Crime, divorce, illegitimacy, prostitution, and other forms of disorganization indicate the degree of social maladjustment which exists in any community. The city is powerful in its influence on the individual, and his personality and character reflect the psycho-social environment in which he lives. The cultural significance of the social organization of any urban center lies first, in the extent to which it facilitates the assimilation of ideas, sentiments, ideals, etc., and, second, in the extent to which it is able to mold the basic impulses of the individuals into expressions of coöperation and coördinated experience. All the social activities should aim to accomplish these two results.

We have emphasized the influence of a man's work upon his mental life. We have discovered that every occupation tends to produce a psychic pattern, with the result that economic groups acquire distinctive men-

tal traits and become more or less individualistic. These mental patterns which grow up within social groups are based primarily upon the differences in the things which people do for their livelihood.<sup>1</sup>

Since there is a close correlation between what one does and what one thinks and feels, we should also consider the influence of recreation and amusement on the thoughts, feelings, wishes, interests, attitudes, and other socio-psychic traits of a community.

The idea of recreation has been too closely associated with the idea of health. There is a very high probability that an important correlation does exist between the two, but the values of recreation extend far beyond the physiological. Play and entertainment influence cultural patterns and institutions. Any interpretation of the cultural life of a group without a consideration of the ways in which it uses its leisure-time must necessarily be inadequate.

Another popular assumption is that wholesome recreation tends to reduce delinquency. The facts do not always support this conclusion. The Juvenile Court of Washington, D.C. prepared a map showing the sections of the city from which most of their cases came. In nearly every instance the geographical areas which had the largest number of delinquents were those in close proximity to playgrounds. The problem of delinquency is deeper than recreational adjustments or maladjust-

<sup>1</sup>See Emory S. Bogardus, *Fundamentals of Social Psychology*, p. 279.

ments. It probably bears a closer relation to the mores and public opinion than to any other social forces. Recreation may stimulate rather than abate delinquency by increasing social contact, and thereby create conflict and the gang spirit. It would be of interest to ascertain the nature of the charges for which the delinquents coming from playground neighborhoods were brought into court. Doubtless, many were guilty of assault, throwing of missiles, and destruction of public property.

However, many of the problems of the person and social group are partially explainable in terms of the ways in which leisure-time is used. Recreation and amusement are factors of no mean importance. This is strongly emphasized in the following statement:

The leisure-time activities which the city produces are so intimately connected with the life of the people that they furnish clues as to the pathology or disorganization typical of city life. The dance hall, the movie, the amusement park, the back-yard or vacant-lot-improvised playground, and the many other forms of public, commercialized, or improvised recreation facilities are phases of group life which cannot escape the sociologist.<sup>1</sup>

The leisure-time activities organize and foster certain definite occupations which offer a market for special talents of individual men. These characteristic types of social organization which the recreational activities develop influence the mental life of the members of the community as profoundly as do the more fundamental

<sup>1</sup>Park and Burgess, *The City*, pp. 199-200:

and essential economic vocations. They condition to a large extent the body of interests and desires of the individuals who are members of the community. The same social processes—competition, selection, segregation, subordination, accommodation, and social control—operate in this area of life as in other fields of human activity. Some of the occupations tend to become professions. This is especially true of the following occupations: entertaining at night clubs, starring in theatrical performances, playing football and baseball, prize fighting, etc. Certain occupations connected with leisure-time activity do not assume a professional character, because they neither secure as much public recognition, nor carry as much dignity as do some others. These are such occupations as selling tickets, stage managing, serving meals, and vending drinks.

Despite the fact that the field of recreation and amusement generates certain well-defined occupations, the leisure-time itself has not, to any great extent, been systematized and brought under control. Hence, in nearly every large urban center, at present, definite programs are being developed to organize the leisure-time of the community.

Meanwhile, the present disorganized condition of recreation and amusement has allowed the human wishes and interests to be subjected to the most extreme forms of commercialism. This profit-seeking motive has ignored almost completely the moral side of the life of the individual and the community. The amusement life of

both Negroes and white people in many of our cities is often dominated by the coarse tastes of men and women entirely unfit for any type of social leadership, especially among impressionable young people. It is possible, however, to establish some control over this tendency through public opinion, if it can be made sufficiently strong. Nevertheless, the profit-seeking motive, though often justifiable, is in many cases out of place in the field of leisure-time activities, since public recreation should be a public function. This implies that it should be taken, as far as possible, out of the hands of private business and lodged in the community.

Probably no greater problem arises in connection with the Negro's adjustment to urban life than that of how to achieve an effective organization and control of his leisure-time activities in the face of race prejudice and other barriers which limit his contacts and frustrate his wishes. Those who have studied seriously the social life of Negroes, realize something of the significant rôle which pleasure and relaxation play among them. Exhibiting strong artistic traits of temperament, the Negro tends to achieve his most creative forms of expression in free spontaneous activity.



PART I

'NON-COMMERCIALIZED RECREATION  
AND AMUSEMENT



## CHAPTER I

### GAMES AND SPORTS

#### BASEBALL

PERHAPS IN FEW other cities of its size in the United States does baseball hold such an insignificant place among colored people as it does in Washington. No prominent Negro teams exist. Some baseball is played, however, by the Y.M.C.A. teams, but such games are of minor importance. It seems that the big-league games have so enlisted the Washington Negroes' interest and loyalty that no enthusiasm can be aroused for such a game among themselves. The following excerpt presents an account of some of the limitations which are placed upon Negroes at the American League Baseball Park:

Washington has no representative Negro baseball club; so the colored citizens devoutly rally to the local American League Club. Here, as in no other phase of their recreational life, contacts between the races suffer less restrictions. In the American League Baseball Park there is comparatively no conscious segregation and the races mingle freely. In the lines during the rush for world-series tickets all social distances were violated and even forgotten. The "fans" of both races vied with each other in the same line for the "coveted paste-board." Hot coffee, sandwiches, and "hot dogs" were bought by the famished "line-holders" from whomsoever chanced to come their way, irrespective of race and nationality.

During the baseball season of 1925, when it became a virtual fact that the Nationals would be a contender for the World Series Pennant, the club office advertised that applications for reserved tickets for the home games would be received and tickets supplied accordingly. Among the many applications that flooded the office were a rather large number from Negro admirers of the club. When the time came to mail the tickets to the applicants only a few of the Negroes who applied were successful in obtaining them. The majority received back their money with an expression of regret that all of the particular seats had been sold in a group. In a few instances two or more Negro fans had tried to get seats near each other in the same section. Some were successful in obtaining their reservations, while others were not. One Mr. P\_\_\_\_\_, an idolizer of the club, who had been successful in getting reservations in 1924, but unsuccessful this time, began to confer with some of his friends, likewise "fans" and admirers of the local club, many of whom had been successful and others unsuccessful. An apparent infidelity or deception was sensed. So the news spread among the Negro fans and a general check-up was made. The fact disclosed was that in the cases in which it could be plausibly determined that the applicant was a Negro, his money was returned, but in all cases in which the address gave the least evidence that the applicant was apparently white, such applicant received his reserved tickets. Even in those sections of the grandstand which some Negro applicants had been told "were sold to clubs," other Negroes received tickets for the same. This incident lowered somewhat the morale of the Negro "fans" and kept from the games many Negroes, who say that they have been veteran supporters of the club—some ever since those days when it was scarcely more than a "sand-lot" team, and when Walter Johnson's balls did not have quite so much "smoke."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>William H. Jones and Damon P. Young, *Negro-White Contacts in Washington, D.C.* (Forthcoming publication).

## GOLF

Golf is a relatively new game among Negroes. It has been so recently assimilated from white culture that it is in an extremely immature stage of development.

Before there were separate golf courses for each race, certain days were set apart for each racial group on which it had full and exclusive right of the course. This procedure went fairly well for a time, but the white players soon became reluctant about relinquishing the course to Negroes on any day. So certain prominent Negro citizens sent in a petition requesting a separate course exclusively for Negroes. This petition was protested against on the ground that it would be a waste of money to construct a separate course, since there were not enough colored players interested in the sport to demand golf grounds. Much sentiment, however, was aroused by the local Negro press, and after much deliberation on the part of the Department of Parks and Playgrounds, a separate "nine-hole" course was constructed on the Potomac Park grounds near the Lincoln Memorial, to be used by colored golfers only. As a result, all needs for racial contact on the golf course have been removed. The investigator, however, witnessed two occasions on which it was necessary for the white keeper of the colored golf course to drive off white golfers, who insisted on usurping the Negroes' course.

The grounds are in good order and comprise one of the most beautiful spots in Washington. Bordered on one side by the Monument grounds, on another by the

Potomac River and on still a third by the Naval Hospital, the course has its situation in an attractive and unique environment.

In October, 1924, the Riverside Golf Club was organized, having as its president Victor Daly, a prominent real estate broker, who had been the leader in the fight for a separate course. Through this organization much interest was created in golf, and during the first three months of the existence of the course more than one thousands rounds of golf were played.

To promote further interest in golf, a tournament was held in the fall of 1924. This was the first of its kind to be held by Negroes in the country. Prizes were offered by the National Benefit Life Insurance Company and local white firms which sell golf equipments. In the spring of 1925 another tournament was held, having eighty-three participants. About forty active members comprise the club and a small membership fee is charged to take care of postage and other incidentals.

The Citizens' Golf Club was organized in 1922 by Dr. M. L. Grant. The motive was to conduct tournaments and entertainments in order to raise funds to buy property and build its own golf club-house and course. This club has conducted two tournaments: the first had fifty entries, the second thirty. The cups for the first tournament were donated by Charles Lane, former manager of the Lincoln Theater; Harrison's Cafe, 455 Florida Avenue, Northwest; and Rufus G. Byars, the manager of the Broadway Theater. The meeting place



THE CITIZENS' GOLF CLUB



GOLFERS AT THE COUNTRY CLUB



of this club is at the Y.M.C.A. on the third Thursday of each month.

The National Golf Association was organized in Washington, D.C. through the leadership of Mr. John R. Hawkins, treasurer of the club. The headquarters are at Stow, Massachusetts.

Indoor golf was instituted during the winter of 1926 both at the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A., and is played from one to five P.M., on Saturdays and from one to two P.M. on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays.

A private golf course is located on the grounds of the National Capital Country Club, and plans are being made by the municipal government to establish another separate course for colored people in Anacostia, D.C.

#### TENNIS

The popularization of tennis in Washington is handicapped by the remoteness of most of the courts from the centers of the Negro population and by the small number of courts which can be used by colored people. The few courts are generally in use. And, in fact, it is often necessary to make a bid for a place if one desires an opportunity to play. Frequently, it happens that individuals who come out for a "work-out" are forced to go away disappointed because some aspiring and ambitious players have monopolized the courts. There is, therefore, an obvious need for more tennis grounds for colored people in Washington.

The sport has taken on a certain degree of organization. There are five clubs: the James E. Walker, the

Howard University, the Dunbar, the Armstrong, and the Junior High School. The James E. Walker Club is the most outstanding. It holds its regular meetings in the form of smokers and attempts to stimulate interest in tennis.

The participants in the sport are for the most part persons from the upper social classes. The outstanding players in Washington are: Woolridge, the junior national champion; Anita Gant, woman's sectional champion; Mrs. Thelma Amos, Tally Holmes, Ted Thompson, James E. Walker, Smith, Wilkerson, and Goff. From several observations there seems to be an average of twenty-five or more women and from forty to a hundred men who play daily in Washington during the tennis season. There are from fifty to a hundred spectators who visit the courts daily.

*Municipal Playground Tennis Courts.*—There are six tennis courts on municipal playgrounds—three at Howard, one at Logan, one at Cardozo, and one at Willow Tree. The records show that twenty-three thousand and four hundred persons use these courts yearly. Courts were first opened on the Howard Playground about 1916. In 1922, courts were opened on the other grounds. There is an excellent "make-shift" tennis court on the Burrville School playground which is open during the summer and which is used extensively by children.

The James E. Walker Tennis Courts, now located at Fifth and W Streets, Northwest, were established in 1907 and 1908 at Sixth and W Streets, Northwest, and

were named the LeDroit Park Courts, two in number. Two years later two more courts were built by some of the members at Thirteenth and T Streets, Northwest. They existed for about two years. About 1912 two courts were built on the present site. The number has now increased to four courts. This club started with a membership of about fifteen, which has increased each year to the present enrollment of one hundred and five. Tournaments have been held each year, beginning with forty entrants and increasing to more than a hundred at the present time. This club is a member of the National Tennis Association and enters a number of its players in the national tournaments each year.

Tournaments are held on all the courts each year for champions in doubles and singles. The Howard Play-ground holds a large tournament every year in which about two hundred persons participate. Silver loving cups are donated by business men of its neighborhood. Crandall's theaters used to donate a cup every year.



## CHAPTER II PLAYGROUNDS

### MUNICIPAL

WASHINGTON HAS SEPARATE PLAYGROUNDS for its Negro population. Six of the twenty-five grounds supported and supervised by the city government are for Negroes. They are situated in or adjacent to Negro areas.

Each playground is supervised by a director who is assisted by two or more paid workers. The equipment is scanty, but the apparatus is modern and of good quality. It consists of sand boxes, tennis courts, baseball diamonds, seesaws, slides, basket ball courts, and giant strides. The Howard Playground is the only one equipped with a swimming pool. This was, for a number of years, the only swimming pool for Negroes in the city. A recent study has shown that:

When the first provision for bathing beaches for citizens of the District was made, Congress passed a bill authorizing the erection of two bathing beaches, one in the Tidal Basin in Potomac Park for white people and one for Negroes. Colonel Clarence O. Sherrill, the Superintendent of Public Buildings and Grounds here, recommended to Congress that the one for Negroes be placed over in Virginia. The Negroes protested and Congress finally ordered that it be placed in the Tidal Basin near that of the whites. Although separate they were in the same body of water, near to each other, so that the races came

in contact going to and fro. After many criticisms of these beaches for one reason or another and for a considerable period, Congress ordered both beaches destroyed. Colonel Sherrill had the only one for Negroes immediately dismantled while he permitted the white people to use theirs for some considerable length of time thereafter before it was likewise dismantled.

Representative Frederick Zihlman, Republican of Maryland, Chairman of the District of Columbia Committee of the House, introduced in the first session of the Sixty-ninth Congress a bathing beach bill authorizing an outlay of \$345,000 for the construction of two pools, one for the Negroes and one for the white people, at points to be designated by the Commissioners. The bill was passed and sites are being considered. The Negro population strenuously objected to the segregated beaches or pools and sought to have the bill stripped of all adjectives that bespoke segregation.<sup>1</sup>

During the swimming season, the swimming pool on the Howard Playground was opened at six A.M. and closed at ten P.M. The total attendance on this pool for the year 1925 was 19,599 boys and men and 6,133 girls and women, making a total of 25,732.<sup>2</sup>

Equipment on these playgrounds is kept in repair by the construction force under the direct supervision of the inspector of playgrounds.

Definite training is given to the directors and play leaders. They are required to meet once a week at the playground headquarters in the Municipal Building to

<sup>1</sup>William H. Jones and Damon P. Young, *Negro-White Contacts in Washington, D.C.* (Unpublished Manuscript).

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Department of Playgrounds*, District of Columbia, pp. 4 ff. (1925).

listen to lectures which outline the work for the following weeks.

The colored playgrounds of the city held a meet on August 8, 1925, at the American League Baseball Park. The Colored Masons, who had secured the park on that day for a parade, gave part of the time to the playgrounds for their field day. Only boys participated; the number was estimated at about three hundred. The meet was won by the Howard playground. The playground department has decided to make this event an annual feature of the summer program.

*The Fourteenth Annual Report of the Department of Playgrounds* makes the following interesting summary of the activities on colored grounds:

All branches of sports that the whites enjoy are promoted on colored grounds. For several reasons intra- rather than inter-playground sports are stressed. First, the colored playgrounds are so widely separated that the problem of transportation and the expense of the same which falls on the shoulders of the youngsters is one that has not been solved satisfactorily. Secondly, the frequenters of the colored grounds prefer to compete on their own grounds. Consequently, the inter-playground meet is the only occasion when the boys are asked to go to a section of the city other than their own to compete.

The inter-playground sports have reached a high point of development and the yearly program is so arranged that competition in all popular sports is conducted.

Playgrounds that have baseball fields organized three or four team leagues that played through a regular schedule of games. Quoit tournaments were held and prizes given to the winners. Basketball, one of the most popular sports on colored grounds,

was played the year round,, and leagues similar to the baseball leagues were conducted.

Volley was another popular sport, and it was not uncommon to see a game with fifteen boys on a side. Roller skating carnivals were held wherever possible, and the officials of the department acted as judges of the races and fancy skating stunts. During the summer some of the youngsters were not inclined to indulge in active games in the middle of the day, so checker clubs and tournaments were arranged. At least two grounds formed glee clubs, and visitors may go on at any time and be entertained for an hour or so with songs, clog dances, and string music.

A marble tournament was held in the spring and the champions of each ground received a medal from the *Daily News* similar to the ones presented to the white champions.

In addition to the sports mentioned above, the boys on colored grounds are given the opportunity to play soccer, tennis, football, mass games, field and track sports, and all the numerous games known to the American boy.<sup>1</sup>

#### SCHOOL YARDS

In addition to the six municipal playgrounds, there are twelve school yards opened as playgrounds during the summers:

Birney—Nicholas Avenue, Anacostia.

Briggs—Twenty-second and E Streets, N.W.

Bruce—Kenyon Street, bet. Georgia and Sherman Aves., N.W.

Burrville—Burrville, D.C.

Cleveland—Eighth and T Streets, N.W.

Crummell—Gallaudet Street and Central Avenue, N.E.

Deanwood—Whittingham and Lane Places, N.E.

Giddings—G Street between Third and Fourth Streets, S.E.

Lovejoy—Twelfth and D Streets, N.E.

<sup>1</sup>Pp. 9-10.



SCENES AT THE HOWARD PLAYGROUND



Magruder—M between Sixteenth and Seventeenth Sts., N.W.  
Slater-Langston—P between North Capitol and First Sts., N.W.  
Bowen—Ninth and E Streets, S.W.

These school yards help to meet the needs of a rapidly increasing Negro population. It is obvious, however, that the play facilities for colored children are quite inadequate to satisfy the requirements resulting from the changes which have been taking place during the past five years. The Negro population is mobile, and is rapidly taking possession of new areas of the city where no recreational facilities are provided. Hence, the Negro children tend to invade the white playgrounds in their adjacent neighborhoods. This has created a serious problem for the Department. Although the white population has abandoned many neighborhoods to colored people, it attempts to retain its old playgrounds in these localities. Hence, the white grounds tend to remain in the neighborhoods which have now become Negro areas, and the colored children deliberately appropriate these facilities for their own needs. The playgrounds which have reported this problem to the Department are the Rosedale, Seventeenth and Kramer Streets, Northwest; the Bloomingdale, First and Bryant Streets, Northwest; the Columbia Heights, Columbia Road, between Georgia Avenue and Sherman Avenue, Northwest; and the Georgetown, Thirty-third and Volta Place, Northwest.

The city government also supports five play stations, two of which are for colored people: the Warfield, located at Fifth and Bryant Streets, Northwest, and the Cook Home, located on W Street, Anacostia. It fosters

two camps: one for white children at Thirty-seventh and R Streets, Northwest, and one for the colored at Eureka Park, Anacostia.

In addition to the organized play which takes place under supervision on municipal and school playgrounds, there seems to be a much larger percentage of disorganized and spontaneous play activity among colored children on the streets, in semi-organized gangs, and in the parks.

The following tables present statistical data concerning the equipment, supervision, and activities of both the municipal and school playgrounds.

TABLE I: EQUIPMENT AND ACTIVITIES OF MUNICIPAL PLAYGROUNDS

## EQUIPMENT OF MUNICIPAL PLAYGROUNDS

PLAYGROUNDS										GENERAL EQUIPMENT					EQUIPMENT FOR SMALL CHILDREN				
Fence	Shelter House	Pavilion	Foun-tain	Piano	Bench	Baby Swing	Giant Stride	Swing	Teeter	Slide	Sand-pile	Wading	Kinder-garten table	Kinder-garten bench					
Cardozo.....	Yes	1	1	1	1	14	6	8	4	2	1	2	2	2					
Howard.....	Yes	1	1	1	1	5	2	6	4	1	2	1	1	2					
Logan.....	Yes	1	1	1	1	9	3	8	4	2	1	1	1	2					
Rose Park....	Yes	1	1	1	1	5	3	4	2	1	1	1	4	4					
Willow Tree...	Yes	1	1	1	1	7	4	8	8	2	1	1	2	1					
Payne.....	No.	All	All apparatus belongs to the Payne School.																

## EQUIPMENT FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Play Station or Gym. Outfit	Travel-ring sets	Horizontal Bar	Parallel Bars	Balance Beam	Jump-ing Poles Sets	Tether Poles	Base-Ball Court	Basket Ball Court	Soccer	Tennis	Swim-ming		
Cardozo.....	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Howard.....	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1
Logan.....	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Rose Park....	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Willow Tree...	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1

## Record of Activities, MUNICIPAL PLAYGROUNDS, 1924

Playgrounds	Number of Participants in					Kindergarten
	Base Ball	Basket Ball	Soccer	Tennis	Schlag	
Cardozo.....	4,167	980	132	2,496	3,220	4,150
Howard.....	22,142	19,791	4,762	7,764	11,765	5,531
Logan.....	2,707	12,441	370	7,056	17,691	17,632
Payne.....	4,075	4,055	... 1,828 1,612	272	2,981 4,061 4,005	4,374 4,682 3,991
Rose Park....	7,183	3,991				
Willow Tree...	2,896	2,125				

TABLE II: PERSONNEL AND VISITS—MUNICIPAL AND SCHOOL YARDS' PLAY GROUNDS

TOTAL NUMBER OF VISITS TO PLAYGROUNDS, DAYS OPEN, and AVERAGE DAILY VISITS

Playground	Boys	Girls	Visitors	Total	Days Open	Average daily visits
Cardoza.....	81,235	60,382	5,170	146,787	237	614
Howard.....	139,300	112,826	17,559	269,685	244	1,105
Logan.....	94,883	90,991	9,452	195,326	242	848
Payne.....	42,101	33,522	941	76,743	296	260
Rose Park....	22,757	20,616	2,033	45,406	244	181
Willow Tree...	47,504	39,492	1,291	88,287	208	424

Playground	Peak Load	Paid Workers on Playgrounds in the Summer, 1924
Cardoza.....	1,013	1 (F) Director—2 (F) Assistants—1 (M) Assistant—1 Caretaker.
Howard.....	1,774	1 (F) Director—2 (F) Assistants—1 (M) Assistant—2 Nursery Asst.—1 Caretaker.
Howard (Pools).....	4	Life Guards—2 Attendants—1 Scrubber—6 Locker boys.
Logan.....	882	1 (F) Director—1 (F) Assistant—1 (M) Assistant—1 Caretaker.
Payne.....	541	1 (F) Director—1 (F) Assistant—1 (M) Assistant—1 Caretaker.
Willow Tree....	706	1 (F) Director—1 (M) Assistant—1 (F) Assistant—1 wading pool attendant—1 (M) Caretaker.
Rose Park....	346	1 (F) Director—1 (F) Assistant—1 (M) Caretaker.

SCHOOL YARDS OPENED AS PLAYGROUNDS—SUMMER, 1924

SCHOOL	Visits	Workers
Birney.....	9,722	3 Females 1 Male
Briggs.....	3,716	2 Females 2 Males
Bruce.....	9,414	2 Females 2 Males
Burrville.....	16,724	3 Females 2 Males
Cleveland.....	5,744	2 Females 1 Male
Crummell.....	8,298	2 Females 1 Male
Deanwood.....	27,554	2 Females 1 Male
Giddings.....	14,621	2 Females 1 Male
Magruder.....	12,952	2 Females 2 Males
Lovejoy.....	13,450	2 Females 1 Male
Slater-Langston.....	10,926	2 Females 2 Males
Bowen.....	16,381	1 Female 1 Male

Name	Location	Acreage	Daily Visits	Paid Workers	Salary	Volunteer Work	Date estab.
Cardoza.....	1st & Eye St. S.W.	2 $\frac{1}{4}$	614	1 Director (F) 1 Assistant (F) 1 Caretaker (M)	\$110 per Mo. \$95 per Mo. \$1020 per Annum.	.....	1908
Howard.....	5th & W Sts. N.W.	3	1105	1 Director (F) 1 Assistant (F) 1 Caretaker (M)	\$110 per Mo. \$75 per Mo. \$1020 per Annum.	2 Asst.	1919
Logan.....	3rd & G Sts. N.E.	$\frac{3}{4}$	848	1 Director (F) 1 Watchman (M)	\$110 per Mo. \$1020 per Annum.	1 Asst.	1922
Payne.....	15th & C Sts. S.E.	$\frac{1}{2}$	225	1 Director (F) 1 Caretaker (M)	\$110 per Mo. \$1020 per Annum.	.....	1924
Rose Park....	27th & O Sts. N.W.	1	181	1 Director (F) 1 Caretaker (M)	\$110 per Mo. \$1020 per Annum.	1 Asst.	1917
Willow Tree*..	3 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ B & C Sts. S.W.	1 $\frac{3}{4}$	424	1 Director (F) 1 Caretaker (M) 1 Director (F) 1 Caretaker (M)	\$110 per Mo. \$1020 per Annum. \$110 per Mo. \$1020 per Annum.	.....	1914

\*The Federal Government purchased the space for this playground at a cost of \$98,000, and spent \$25,000 for its construction and equipment.

## CHAPTER III

### CAMP PLEASANT, THE NATIONAL CAPITAL COUNTRY CLUB, AND NEARBY SUMMER RESORTS

#### CAMP PLEASANT

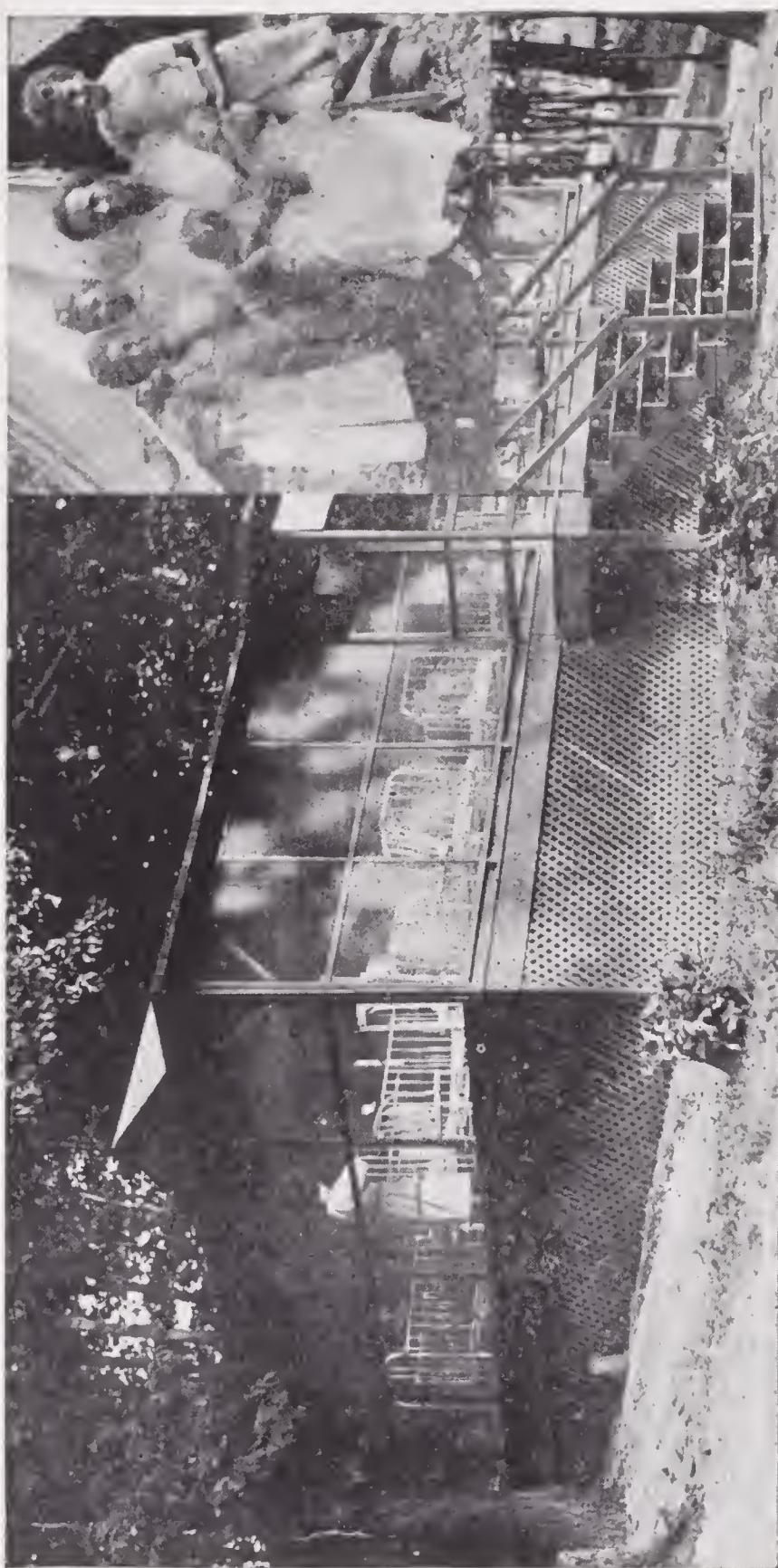
CAMP PLEASANT IS ONE of the two summer camps fostered by the Associated Charities for the disadvantaged mothers and children of Washington, D.C. Camp Good Will is for white children and mothers and Camp Pleasant for colored. Camp Pleasant had its beginning in 1906, as the result of the earnest efforts of a few school teachers, ministers, and volunteer social workers who realized the necessity of vacations away from home for many who could not afford them. Husbands in the submerged group frequently take holidays by deserting their families. Mothers are forced to remain at home and care for the younger children, with aid from outside sources. Often the overwork and constant strain result in the poor health and even the loss of the mother. The children, naturally, suffer therefrom, sometimes having to be taken over by the children's agency of the community. Vacation at camp, then, is a preventive measure—a preventive against disintegration of the family. It is also a good business investment for the community.

The first camp was located at Tuxedo, Maryland, and

was under the direction of Miss Julia N. Wilson, an untrained volunteer worker with a fine missionary spirit. It was financed through the efforts of a committee of colored people with the moral and financial support of a committee of white friends, headed by such men as John Joy Edson and Dr. Kober. It is interesting to note how many names appear from year to year in all the reports of the camp activities from the time of its opening until now: Miss Mary Cromwell, Dr. Charles Tignor, Mr. Samuel Middleton, Dr. D. E. Wiseman, Dean George William Cook, Miss H. H. Beason, Mr. John Joy Edson, and Dr. Kober.

The old records show that there were entertained in this first camp a total of 128 mothers and children under fourteen, at an expenditure of between six and seven hundred dollars for the season of six weeks. The camp average was twenty-five persons a day, and the periods were two weeks long, as is the case now. The history of the camp from 1906 to 1909, inclusive, records Miss Wilson as still directing, and we note that it was moved during this time from Tuxedo to Notley Hall, Oxen Hill, Maryland. The number of people entertained and the amount expended annually remained about the same. In the meantime this work, which was begun by a volunteer committee, had been taken over by a regularly constituted sub-committee of the Associated Charities, known to this day as the Summer Outings Committee, with John Joy Edson, its original chairman, still at its head.

The camp was completely re-organized along scientific



MOTHERS, CHILDREN, AND OTHER SCENES AT CAMP PLEASANT



lines in 1910, under the direction of the late Dr. J. H. N. Waring, a physician, an educator, and till his death, a Trustee of Howard University. It was moved to Fairmont Heights, D.C., then a rural settlement. It was Dr. Waring's idea that a summer camp was not merely a place for a vacation or a day's outing, but also a place for instruction in proper health habits and general living. And under his wise direction Camp Pleasant, though two years younger than Camp Good Will, soon took the lead, and its plans and methods were used as models for the other camp. It grew steadily for the seven years of Dr. Waring's administration, increasing in numbers for the season to about 350, with an expenditure of \$3000.00 for the two camps. In 1917, Dr. Waring was called away from the city to do other important work, and at his urgent insistence, the present superintendent, Mrs. Laura B. Glenn, prominent as a director of a branch of the Associated Charities, was persuaded to take over the work.

For three years, the seasons of 1917 to 1919, inclusive, the camp remained at Fairmont Heights, which had by that time grown into a thickly populated community. In 1920 it was moved to its present site at Blue Plains, D.C., where it occupies by courtesy of the officials of the District of Columbia and of the Board of Charities, a part of the land assigned to the Industrial Home for Colored Boys. In the season of 1925 the Summer Outings Committee of the Associated Charities entertained at its two camps over one thousand mothers and chil-

dren under twelve years of age. Of that number, Camp Pleasant registered 584.

In these camps the mothers and children are not only given two weeks of fresh air, abundant good food, and freedom from present cares and duties, but they also learn the things which that oftentimes overrated teacher, instinct, never taught them about the care of youngsters. To the writer this particular work is not only the most interesting but the most effective, which can be done for the poor and unprivileged groups. To the social worker it is a sort of laboratory, where the formulas prescribed are worked out carefully under supervision, with constant thought and effort toward their improvement. The keeping of these children mentally and physically clean until they are fourteen years old, is not only saving their lives, but saving their characters.

The mothers who go along with the children get the stimulus of the camp ; and it is possible to estimate adequately the educational benefit which is derived from the daily and hourly association of these mothers and children with a staff of workers selected because of their sympathetic interest in human beings.

#### A DAY AT CAMP

A descriptive account of what takes place during the course of the day at Camp Pleasant may help to convey a clear idea of its methods and purposes. The day starts off with the rising-bell at six, and this is followed by two other bells at intervals of fifteen minutes, for supervised attention to the personal toilet in preparation for



LUNCH PERIOD AT CAMP PLEASANT



THE BABY SHACK AT CAMP PLEASANT



the day's program. Then at six-forty-five A.M., comes the general assembly on the pavilion for morning prayer, for flag-raising, and a song or two. A generous breakfast of nutritious food is served at seven o'clock. Then follows a period of clean-up, with supervised games, both old and new, the types and quality varying according to the ability of the worker in charge on any particular day. When the games are over there is a wash-up, with time allowed for a little music to quiet the excited nerves, and prepare for the noonday dinner, the heaviest meal of the day. An hour of rest follows dinner, when the children lie prostrate on the ground. During this hour the mothers give attention to their children under three years, who have been left at the shack under the care of trained nurses for the day. From this point on, the program varies to suit the demands of the day. It may be a dip in the pool for the boys while the girls go for a hike, or vice versa; it may be story-telling or handicraft for both children and mothers; or if it rains, special and alluring games specially adapted to such occasions are played. Wash-up again and then supper at five. This is followed by a period known as "free-time," when the children are left to their own devices, and the social worker gets a chance to study them under normal and natural conditions. At seven o'clock the warning bell sounds. This means "prepare for the night." Children under three years have been taken from the Baby Shack by their mothers after supper, and are supposed to be asleep. At seven-thirty the mothers and older children gather on the pavilion for

the lowering of the flag, music, songs, and for giving thanks in prayer for the day's benefits received. The camp has no bugler, and so with the singing of "taps" the children go off to bed.

#### THE NATIONAL CAPITAL COUNTRY CLUB

Near the end of the year, 1925, a few of the prominent colored citizens began to realize the social deficiencies of the Negro population of Washington; and in frequent informal conferences and after-dinner gatherings they freely discussed the subject of the recreational needs of the upper social classes. These persons began to figure to see if the plan of organizing a country club would really be practical. They decided finally that it was just the thing to do, if only some prominent men would take the lead in the matter. So a committee of Washington's leading Negro business and professional men, comprising such persons as Judge James A. Cobb, Dr. A. M. Curtis, Mr. Victor R. Daly, Dr. Emmett J. Scott, Dr. M. O. Dumas, and Dr. H. S. McCard—all men of rare social contact and executive ability—was formed to promote the project.

The public was soon gratified to learn that the National Capital Country Club had been formed, with its membership drawn from the most prominent people in the city. It is known as a semi-social, semi-athletic club. Its membership embraces both men and women. It was organized for the purpose of furnishing an avenue by which the leisure-time of the leading social classes of Negroes might be spent more pleasantly.



THE NATIONAL CAPITAL COUNTRY CLUB



Almost before the Country Club had been formed, plans were being made to secure for the new organization a comfortable home. After a number of places had been considered, a home was finally purchased on a site about mid-way between Washington and Baltimore, close to the main line of the B. & O. Railroad and the Washington-Laurel Bus Line.

The Country Club grounds comprise twenty-three acres of land on which have been constructed a nine-hole golf course and six tennis courts. The grounds are made attractive by a bit of natural scenery in the form of a magnificent blue-grass lawn and a variety of shrubbery.

The clubhouse is equipped to afford many avenues of pleasure. It has a dining room capable of seating sixty-five persons, ten adequately equipped bed-rooms and baths, and has an entire wing of the house for dancing and billiard tables. The broad verandas, fluted columns, and general air of comfort and elegance within make the building in reality a clubhouse.

The annual openings are among the most brilliant social functions given by Washington Negroes; and these, together with the usual holiday parties, make a very gay season.

Tennis is the foremost of the outdoor activities to which the club is dedicated, and tournaments are held during the tennis season between members of the various tennis clubs of Washington and Baltimore. Dancing is the principal indoor entertainment. Up to the present time, the artistic and esthetic elements, e.g., musical

and dramatic activities, have not been introduced to any great extent into the life of the National Capital Country Club.

#### NEARBY SUMMER RESORTS

Two prominent summer resorts for well-to-do Negroes have been developed by the leading Negro real estate dealers of Washington. The most outstanding is Highland Beach, situated in Maryland on the Chesapeake Bay. Here a large number of the wealthier classes of Washington, chiefly professional and business men, have summer homes. These cottages are built near the water-front, affording an accessibility to the water at all times. A few of the wealthy professional men have erected summer homes here at the cost of more than ten thousand dollars. The majority of the oldest, wealthiest, and best-known families of Washington own homes here. The principal forms of recreation are: rowing, swimming, fishing, dancing, tennis, etc. A hotel is located here and the expenses are such as to maintain a superior atmosphere.

Another summer resort for Washington Negroes is located at Colton, Maryland. It is also a magnificent site, situated on a water-front, affording an ideal atmosphere for permanent recreation. Scores of persons from Washington's most prominent social sets visit this resort every year. Here the ordinary social and health-giving amusements and sports are fostered.

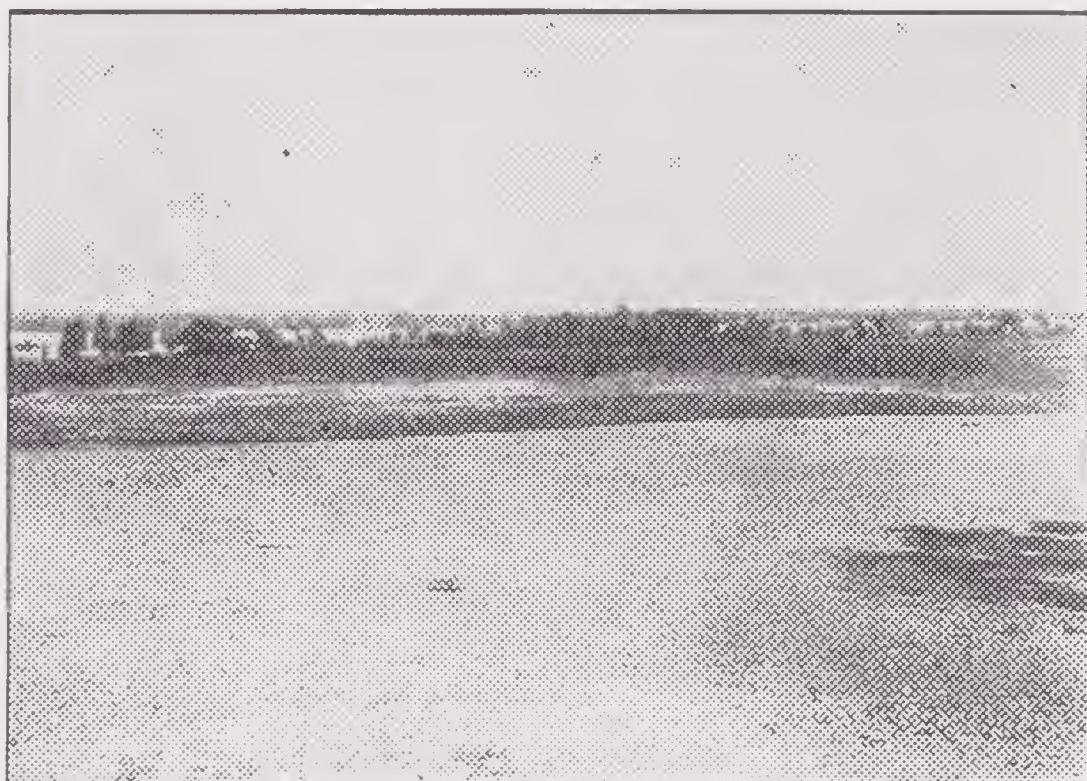
A new summer resort is just being opened at Cedar Haven on the Patuxent River about thirty miles from

Washington. The site has been laid off according to very well-defined plans, and the streets are named after eminent Negroes who are now dead. The site has a beautiful sand and gravel beach, stretching for almost a mile along the river-front. Because of its natural beauty and its proximity to the river, it has the opportunity of becoming the leading summer resort for Washington Negroes.





THE BEACH



SKY, LAND, AND WATER  
SCENES AT CEDAR HAVEN



## CHAPTER IV

### SOCIAL CENTERS

THREE INSTITUTIONS comprise the so-called centers of social activity. These are the community centers, located at various schools, the Y.W.C.A., and the Y.M.C.A.

#### THE COMMUNITY CENTERS

The community center movement has mobilized the Negro as well as the white population. Centers have been established at the following schools: Dunbar High School, Lovejoy, Phillips, located in Georgetown, Birney, Miner Normal, Burrville, Cleveland, and Deanwood. During the winter season temporary centers are opened once a week at the Randall and Military Road Schools. The former is located in the Southwest section; the latter, in Brightwood. The principal types of activity carried on at these various centers are dramatics, athletics, and handwork. These centers are under the direction and supervision of the Board of Education.

#### THE YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

The Phyllis Wheatley Y.W.C.A. was founded May 5, 1905. It is the oldest Y.W.C.A. organization in the city. It is located at Ninth Street and Rhode Island Avenue, Northwest, in the heart of the Negro popula-

tion. It is one of the most imposing public buildings for colored people in this city and is favored with the most wholesome environment that this city affords.

In accordance with the law of seniority of rank, it should be the central branch of the city. Its racial attachments, however, have not allowed this to be possible. It has never affiliated in any way with the Central "Y." Investigation brought to light the fact that considerable hostility exists on the part of the Central Branch toward the colored organization because of the latter's precedence as to age.

This organization has experienced the administration of only two presidents. The first served ten years, and the second is now serving her twelfth year. There are some women who have been employed since its beginning, twenty-two years ago; among them may be mentioned Miss E. F. G. Merritt, Miss M. P. Shadd, and Mrs. A. E. Cromwell.

The membership of the organization was 2469 in 1925, not counting the Girl Reserves. This includes women of all denominations, of all sections of the city, and of all ages. The last Thursday of each month is membership night. During the year 1925 there were housed in the building seventy-five permanent guests, 473 transients; and 144 others applied and were unable to secure accommodation. Three hundred and sixty-six persons were aided in securing employment. There were twelve travelers aid cases and fifty-four others given assistance. One hundred and thirty-six went to the Summer Camp at Arundel-on-the-Bay.



THE PHYLLIS WHEATLEY Y.W.C.A.



Through the constant and persistent efforts to make adequate provisions for the proper expression of the dynamic impulses of the young women of Washington, the personnel of this institution has created many clubs with their efforts concentrated upon activities which are germane to the life and well-being of womanhood.

The Girl Reserves is an organization which is composed of twelve clubs, with a membership of 260 persons. There are three general classes of girls who comprise this organization: (1) graded school girls; (2) junior high school girls; (3) senior high school girls. The ages of this group range from eleven to eighteen years. These groups hold regular meetings, each of which occupies about two hours. The Girl Reserves operates under what is called a fourfold program. This program involves the very vital elements of *health, knowledge, service, and spirit*. The health activities include gymnastics, such as basketball, tennis, dodgeball, fencing, hikes, and picnics. Under *knowledge* are subsumed such activities as sewing, handwork, dramatics, and music. In this connection the girls often initiate and conduct plays to which they extend the public a cordial welcome. Moreover, there is usually a most unhesitating response on the part of parents and friends who not only attend because of an intrinsic love for art and beauty, but also to give hearty approbation to this wholesome and unique method of sublimation. It seems to be a general consensus among the constituents of the Girl Reserves that the most beneficial and self-satisfying good that can be realized in this organization is the

rendering of such services to the more unfortunate institutionalized folk as will make them happy and more favorably disposed towards the natural revelations of life's problems. With this thought indelibly impressed upon them, these girls endeavor to develop what Dr. Adler, the Austrian exponent of "Individual Psychology," calls the "social feeling."<sup>1</sup> This, according to Dr. Adler, conditions the development in the child of a "useful style of life." The activities of the girls of this club take the form of selecting, preparing and donating *gift boxes* for the poor and sick.

There is a conscious effort on the part of this organization to inculcate into all the activities of these groups, the principles of the teachings of Jesus. But the more direct method of participation in religious exercises is employed also. At various times during the year, the Sunday evening services are conducted by them at the "Y" building. Hence, there is an attempt to develop a well-rounded life; while at the same time there is an effort on the part of the personnel to appreciate, control, and direct the human-nature impulses and desires of the young women.

Members are secured in this organization through direct appeals to parents, schools, and churches. Girls of every section of this city are encouraged to participate in and share the life and activities of these groups. Frequently group meetings are held at the Zion Baptist

<sup>1</sup>This idea was advanced by Dr. Adler in two lectures on "Individual Psychology," at Howard University in the spring of 1927.

Church, in Southwest Washington, the Union Wesley Church, Northwest, and the Shaw Junior High School.

Moreover, there are other clubs subsumed under the general scope of the "Y" activities. These are sufficiently impressive and influential to demand serious attention. These clubs are under the caption of the Industrial and Business Girls Clubs. They are nine in number, maintaining as their general objective social service work. In most cases the writer will be able only to name the clubs referred to. They are as follows: Valencia, Dramatic, Bureau, Mothers', National Benefit, Sunshine, Hostess, and Industrial Council. These clubs comprise representatives from other clubs mentioned above.

Apparently, each of these clubs addresses itself primarily to the interest of the group which it represents. When one becomes aware of the fact that each occupation or profession develops its own peculiar occupational type, one can perhaps get a vision of the prolific service that such clubs might render. In view of the fact that the tendency of people in general is to comprehend and grasp the problems of life in the light of the body of experiences that must condition their responses, one can imagine what a club which is functioning intelligently and which is designed especially to reckon with the intricate human-nature problems of a certain class of people, might accomplish. It is in these clubs that the constituents discuss problems and experiences that are peculiar to their own vocation and

life. Hence, a wholesome catharsis is realized in a disguised but beneficial manner.

The Hostess Club presents the most overt human-nature interests that might be readily apprehended, without drawing too strenuously upon the imagination. This club is composed of the young women who occupy the building more or less permanently. For the most part, these young women are students of the various schools of the city. It seems that the morale, the jubilant spirit, and congenial life of the institution is conditioned to a very large extent by this group of young women. During vacation season, after all the schools have closed and most of the "Y" girls have returned to their homes, the "Y" seems to take on a "stiffness" which makes one somewhat restless and self-conscious while subjected to its atmosphere; for he will find himself being casually but soberly and sternly gazed at by the more matronly women, who seem to be engrossed in and actuated by the forces of social control which were characteristic of a generation ago. But to revert to the girls composing the Hostess Club. Because of their connections or associations through class and school activities, they are in constant contact with the young men of the various schools of the city, and especially Howard University. This makes the "Y" a stimulating, attractive, and desirable place for many of the young men who are in quest of an evening of wholesome entertainment. But, within the "Y" itself, a different set of problems confront the young women. At times, the Darwinian theory of the "Survival of the Fittest" seems to be much in

evidence. Argument and intellectual combats become rife at times. When one of the women meets a new friend, she is usually congenial enough to present him to some of her friends in the building. Immediately her friends enter into a competitive struggle for the attention of the young man. This type of struggle has been a powerful agent in stratifying or grouping the girls. The grouping might be made conveniently into the following classes: (1) the most attractive young women, who have frequent young men visitors; (2) the less attractive young women, who have occasional visitors; (3) the least attractive, who have lost out in the struggle and have, therefore, no visitors. As a result, they set up a compensatory reaction against all interviewers. Their general plea is that their "friend" is at their home or some other place, too far to be conveniently reached; and they simply want to be true to him. Each of these groups maintains a certain social distance from the others and this tends to develop "we groups" and "others" groups." The good fortune of the first two groups, however, is minutely shared by the less fortunate girls; for they often permit themselves to "happen in" when a young man has put in a call for his friend and awaits her arrival. Such a scene involves factors which are of considerable human interest.

This club of girls is significant in other connections also. Each Sunday morning devotional exercises are conducted by some members of the organization. Frequently some of the most prominent personages of the city are called in to discourse on some subject that is

germane to the life of the group in particular, and womanhood in general.

Moreover, the "social feeling" idea seems to be developed to the extent that the young women realize a deep-seated gratification through putting forth efforts in the interest of alleviating conditions of poverty and dependency. Thus, this club raises funds, a part of which is donated to the poor and sick.

Finally, it seems obvious that the Phyllis Wheatley Y.W.C.A. has dedicated itself to a service that is indispensable to the wholesome development and expression of a large group of feminine interests in Washington. Although the recreational significance of these various clubs might in some cases seem subtle and delicate, yet they are important, for in some cases they act as sublimating agencies; in others they suspend the general cares of life and direct attention to the lighter and more hopeful aspects of life's problems.

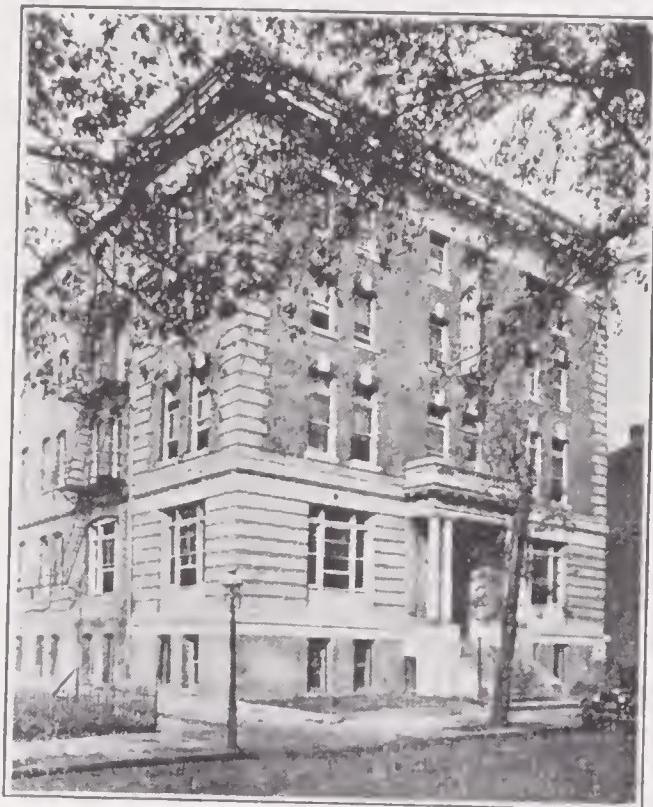
The following is a summary of the recreational activities fostered by the Phyllis Wheatley Y.W.C.A.: (a) Girl Reserves, (b) Summer Camps, (c) Social Service, (d) Basketball, (e) Volleyball, (f) Tennis, (g) Swimming Clubs.

#### THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

The Y.M.C.A. for colored men is located at 1816 12th Street, Northwest, and is known as the Twelfth Street Branch. It is affiliated with the Central Y.M.C.A. It was founded in 1853 by Anthony Bowen, a colored man, reputed to have been the first person in the District of

Columbia to provide free education for colored children. He was an intimate friend of the founder of the white Y.M.C.A., both being clerks in the Patent Office. The present membership is about 450 men and 500 boys. On the whole, it is not so highly organized as the Y.W.C.A. In 1925 a new project was launched in order to enliven the spirit of the organization. The gymnasium classes consist of calisthenics, boxing, setting-up exercises, wrestling, basket-ball, pocket billiards, bowling on a small scale, checkers, etc. The organization is able to do practically nothing along the line of organized baseball. Basketball, however, is strongly emphasized. During the basketball season of the year 1924-1925 the "Y" boys played sixty-four games. An admission price of fifteen cents was charged for fifty-four of them.





THE COLORED Y.M.C.A.



## CHAPTER V

### THE CHURCH AND RECREATION

#### ITS LOSING STRUGGLE WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

THE CHURCH seems to be impotent as a recreational agency, in so far as it attempts to compete with such institutions as the theatre, dance hall, and playground in supplying an outlet for energy and the spirit of adventure. Most of the churches seem not to be cognizant of the futility of their efforts to draw the interest and attention of the young people from the recreational activities of those agencies that are not so circumscribed by public opinion. Basketball, baseball, dancing, billiards, etc., under church supervision, must ever remain less attractive and inferior, to some extent, to those same activities when carried on by agencies more or less free from conventional moral supervision. These are not the activities in which the church can expect to register its greatest influence; for it cannot compete with the dance hall in supplying amusement and entertainment. The kind of dancing that interests and stimulates is that which has a decided tendency towards excess and degeneracy. No church could continue as an institution for spiritual and moral guidance that featured such dances as the "Black Bottom," the "Bump," and "Prosperity Crawl." However, other institutions,

because of their greater freedom from the control of the moral judgments of the community, can foster such extremes in behavior.

The religious, philanthropic, and social agencies do not exist primarily for the purpose of providing play and recreation. Their chief functions are expressed in the names which they bear. But experience has proved that in some cases the ends for which they exist can best be attained by providing some means of play and amusement as an incentive to those who are to be recipients of the higher values. This is a sort of ancillary use of play and recreation, which the church has been very slow in recognizing. Although the church is purported to be a moral and spiritual agency, it is above all else a socializing agency. The church that socializes in the more wholesome sense spiritualizes its adherents. The highest spiritual values are always to be found where there exists the highest social values. We are sometimes not aware of the fact that many of the ordinary uses of the church building are, at least in part, recreational. A careful study of the psychology of religion shows it to be a mode of relaxation. In the so-called "hallelujah church," may be discovered a type of behavior which bears a number of marks of similarity to the behavior found in certain cabarets. Both are characterized by the orgiastic element, the increase of stress and nervous tension, and the general emotional catharsis. In both places the abnormal reactions are the result of intense inter-social stimulations forming a basis for suggestibility and unconscious imitation. The orgiastic activity of the

church lays claim to superiority, in the sense that it tends to shift responsibility to a higher power.

The church realizes its highest recreational expression in its informal features. The Sunday School with its occasional special program, the church socials, choir practice, casual entertainments, class meetings, men's clubs, etc., are the chief activities of the average church that supply recreation. The stiff formal services are not really recreational, since they do not supply relaxation. One of the distinctive features of the Negro church, from its very foundation in slavery times to the present day, has been the service which it has rendered as a social and recreational agency. The following excerpt is a statement of the significance of the Negro church in the Negro community:

The Negro church is much more than merely an institution of worship. The strictly religious meetings are a small part of the weekly program of the ordinary church. It is a center around which a great part of the social and public life of the people revolves. . . . It is the center of information for the community; it functions as a newspaper. It is a place to see friends, hear the neighborhood gossip, meet strangers, carry on flirtations and courtship. . . . It encourages musical and dramatic performances. It is the center of the organized hedonistic activities: social gatherings, suppers, picnics, and entertainments of all kinds take place in the church or are sponsored by it. Lectures and political meetings are held in the church and it is the place where all sorts of fakirs get a hearing.

It is, however, losing ground. This is to some extent a part of the general decline of religion resulting from the development of science and the spread of knowledge; the Negroes are being influenced to some extent by the spread of modern ideas.

But there are other and more important reasons, chief of which is the development of new avenues of expression and amusement. In the larger towns the churches no longer have a monopoly on social resources. There are other meeting places and other means of amusement. There is better music to be heard outside of the church. Other men are better trained than the ministers, and individuals no longer turn to churchmen for information and instruction. Places of amusement are developing, and with them the churches cannot compete.<sup>1</sup>

It does not seem possible to expect much from the Negro churches in Washington in the way of providing recreation while denominational lines remain as tightly drawn as they are now. The larger percentage of the energy of the small struggling church is spent in keeping up traditional religious activities and in attempting to maintain its own existence. This keeps it from affiliating with other social institutions in providing for the care of the leisure-time activities in buildings other than its own. So it appears that fuller utilization of present church plants for recreational purposes cannot be expected in the near future.

Other organizations in the community that might develop a program of coöperation with the church are generally too narrow, being so built around a single idea or set of ideas that they cannot be brought into co-operation with the other social forces of the community.

#### INSTITUTIONAL CHURCHES AND THEIR ACTIVITIES

In the strict sense of the word, institutional churches are very few among colored people in Washington. In this

<sup>1</sup>E. B. Reuter, *The American Race Problem*, pp. 331-33.

study, churches having some form of recreational activities are referred to as institutional. Those of the Protestant denomination are as follows:

Shiloh Baptist Institutional Church—1500 Ninth Street, N.W.  
Lincoln Temple Congregational Church—11th and R Sts., N.W.  
Gibralter A.M.E. Zion Church—6th St., bt. L & M Sts., N.W.  
Union A.M.E. Zion—Georgetown.

St. Mary's Episcopal Church—23rd St., bet. G & H Sts., N.W.  
St. Luke's Episcopal Church—15th and Church Sts., N.W.  
Calvary Episcopal Church—11th and G Sts., N.E.

The Catholic churches all have institutional features, but the three outstanding institutional churches of this denomination are:

St. Augustine's Catholic Church—15th St., bt. L & M Sts., N.W.  
St. Cyprian's Catholic Church—12th and C Sts., S.E.  
Church of the Holy Redeemer—New York Ave. & M St., N.W.

The recreational activities of the Protestant churches are supervised, more or less, by an interdenominational Christian Endeavor Union, national in its scope. Each church has a local chapter of the Christian Endeavor Society which has an athletic association department. This department is the most outstanding recreational organization in the church life of America.

Basketball is the main athletic sport of all of these churches. The teams are composed of the junior and senior adult males. Baseball is the second ranking sport fostered by these institutions. Many of the churches have organized baseball teams and tennis clubs. Track teams are also becoming popular. Competitive games are

held between the church teams and the school and Y.M.C.A. teams.

Shiloh Baptist Church leads in institutional activities. It plans to perfect and carry out in a more efficient manner a well-developed recreational program. Its program of development as an institutional church covers a period of more than five years. This program might be said to embrace not only the religious life but also the educational and social life of its communicants. Provisions have been made for the babies and smaller children who on Sunday mornings might grow restless during the service. Two young women are placed in charge of them in a room on the first floor, which might be called a nursery, but which is called the "Sunday School Beginners' Classroom."

Shiloh's basketball team has been playing as a unit for more than four years, being composed of the junior and senior men of the church. The baseball team has been handicapped in its development, because of the difficulty in getting the young men interested. Then there is the problem of finance, since nine other departments are obtaining their funds from the same source. There is a basketball team among the girls, which has been in existence for more than a year. Up to the present time their competitive games have been few. Most of these girls are also members of the Sewing Circle of the church, which makes garments for foreign missions.

Shiloh Church has two reception rooms, one for women and one for general use. A plan is being developed whereby during the week this room for general use

may be utilized by the young women of the church under the supervision of a chaperon. The principal motive is to furnish a place for girls who room in the city, in order that they might have some place in which to entertain other than in their bed rooms.

The church has no gymnasium or community center as such, but both have been considered in its plans of development. Included in these plans is a gymnasium equipped with the most modern apparatus, so that it may become a prime factor in the life of the young communicants.

Annual outings are given by the church and are largely attended by the members. Hiking parties and "hayrides" are fostered during the spring and summer months. The strong sentiment against recreational activities being sponsored by the church has been the chief handicap to the development of the institutional phase of the church work.





THE ELKS ON DRESS PARADE



THE LINCOLN CONGREGATIONAL TEMPLE SUNDAY SCHOOL PICNIC



## CHAPTER VI

### HOWARD UNIVERSITY AS A RECREATIONAL CENTER

#### ITS UNIQUENESS

HOWARD UNIVERSITY is the nucleus of Washington's Negro athletics. Through its annual Thanksgiving football classic with Lincoln University, held every other year at home, it has given to the Negro life of Washington a prestige among other cities and a magnetic influence over vicinal districts which no other field of Negro life in the capital can approximate. Practically every village, town and city in the United States is affected by this great athletic event. It draws to Washington more than ten thousand people from other sections of the country, creating an occasion similar to the carnival season in New Orleans and other cities. Every day for approximately a week scores of important social affairs are held. These consist of breakfast, matinee, and evening dances, poker games, bridge parties, slumming, cabaret parties, and numerous other entertainments. The external manifestations of Negro wealth constitute one of the noticeable features of this occasion. The display of magnificent cars and wearing apparel adds dignity and glamour to the crowds that collect in the stadium, on the streets, and at places of entertain-

ment. As soon as one arrives in Washington, when such a gala event is taking place, he becomes conscious of the fact that he is on the threshold of stimulation.

For the most part, conventionalized and socially sanctioned behavior tends to break down and there is set up a more spontaneous expression of impulses which are free from so many inhibitory forces. Because of powerful suggestion, the sentiments and ideas of all the persons in such a mass take more or less the same direction and the conscious personality of the individual is blended into a more or less collective mental expression. The individual's behavior under the intense suggestibility of the crowd becomes much more irrational than it is under normal conditions. A more lucid statement of this appears in the following excerpt:

Different causes determine the appearance of these characteristics peculiar to crowds and not possessed by isolated individuals. The first is that the individual forming part of a crowd acquires, solely from numerical considerations, a sentiment of invincible power which allows him to yield to instincts which, had he been alone, he would perforce have kept under restraint. He will be less disposed to check himself from the consideration that, a crowd being anonymous and in consequence irresponsible, the sentiment of responsibility which always controls individuals disappears entirely.<sup>1</sup>

Two gigantic spectator crowds, totalling approximately 20,000 people, wild with enthusiasm, assemble at the stadium to witness the classic. Since these two groups

<sup>1</sup>Gustave LeBon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*, p. 2.



THE HOWARD-LINCOLN STRUGGLE  
"Old Howard Forever"



represent diverse interests, crowd contagion becomes strong, and each group secretly, if not openly, expresses a desire for victory at any cost.<sup>1</sup>

These two massive aggregates are composed of the Howard and Lincoln enthusiasts, including alumni, former students, and friends, together with the student-body of both institutions. The rabbles and bands are under the leadership of individuals who have striking personalities and who are attired in bright-colored uniforms. The two sides compete strongly with each other in yelling, singing, and cheering. Prior to and during the game hundreds of persons remain on dress parade and in this way furnish attraction to those who are disposed to occupy their seats. The psychological moment is reached when the two teams appear on the field, trained to perfection, both physically and mentally, for the contest. Both teams are fully aware of the significance of the occasion and fix their minds on victory for their respective schools, disdaining defeat with the greatest amount of dread.

This interscholastic struggle is a traditional event. It had its beginning in the early nineties and continued to develop until it has now become the most outstanding intercollegiate athletic event among Negro colleges. From a mere handful of spectators the crowd has increased to more than eighteen thousand people.

This event really did not attract wide attention until

<sup>1</sup>G. E Howard, "Social Psychology of the Spectator," *American Journal of Sociology*, xviii, 35-50, presents an interesting discussion of this type of crowd.

1919, when the game was held in Philadelphia for the first time. It was on this occasion that the attention of the athletic world was attracted to its future possibilities and importance. This date marked the beginning of a strong rivalry between Philadelphia and Washington for supremacy in entertaining the thousands of persons who attend this annual event.

#### THE NEW STADIUM AND GYMNASIUM-ARMORY BUILDING

These two structures were completed in 1926 at a total cost of \$301,151.52, of which sum the Federal Government appropriated \$197,500.00. The Stadium is situated between Fifth and Sixth Streets, Northwest, and extends from a point, twenty feet north of Clark Hall for a distance of six hundred and fifty feet. This structure fills a community need as do the parks, playgrounds, and other means of recreation. It is a commodious and safe permanent structure where the recognized collegiate sports have their proper presentation amid appropriate surroundings and at a cost usually within the reach of all. It is similar to the Greek stadia in being U-shaped. It is built of heavy frame material, is adequately reinforced, but has no roof built over the seats on either side. It is a pioneer structure of its kind in Negro colleges, and reflects much credit upon its designers. It is the largest Negro stadium in America, having a permanent seating capacity of 12,000 and a space accommodation for 20,000. The stadium accommodates a football gridiron, a quarter-mile cinder track, with a one hundred yard straight-away. The field is completely

THE HOWARD UNIVERSITY VARSITY BASKETBALL TEAM FOR 1926





enclosed and modernly equipped with drainage and other sanitary facilities.

The new Gymnasium-Armory Building is one of the most unique buildings of its kind to be found among Negroes. It has a basement and two upper stories; all designed and equipped for athletic and recreational purposes. The basement is equipped with a swimming room, twenty by sixty feet, with an observation gallery which seats approximately three hundred people. It is also equipped with showers for men and women, store rooms, and toilets. The first story, or main floor, contains corridors and lobbies; lockers for men and women; offices for instructors and supervisors; a main gymnasium room, fifty-five feet wide and ninety feet long, equipped with a basketball court, a track one-tenth of a mile in length, punching bags and a variety of the most modern apparatus. On this same floor is the Armory room and storage and office facilities to accommodate the R.O.T.C.

The top floor is equipped and set aside especially for health and hygiene purposes. The University physician's offices are located here, and in addition there is a hospital or first aid room. A room is also provided on this floor for trophies.

#### ITS ATHLETIC PROGRAM

In addition to football, other important recreational and athletic events take place in the stadium, gymnasium, or elsewhere on the campus. The Annual Field Day Meet started at Howard before the Great War and has taken

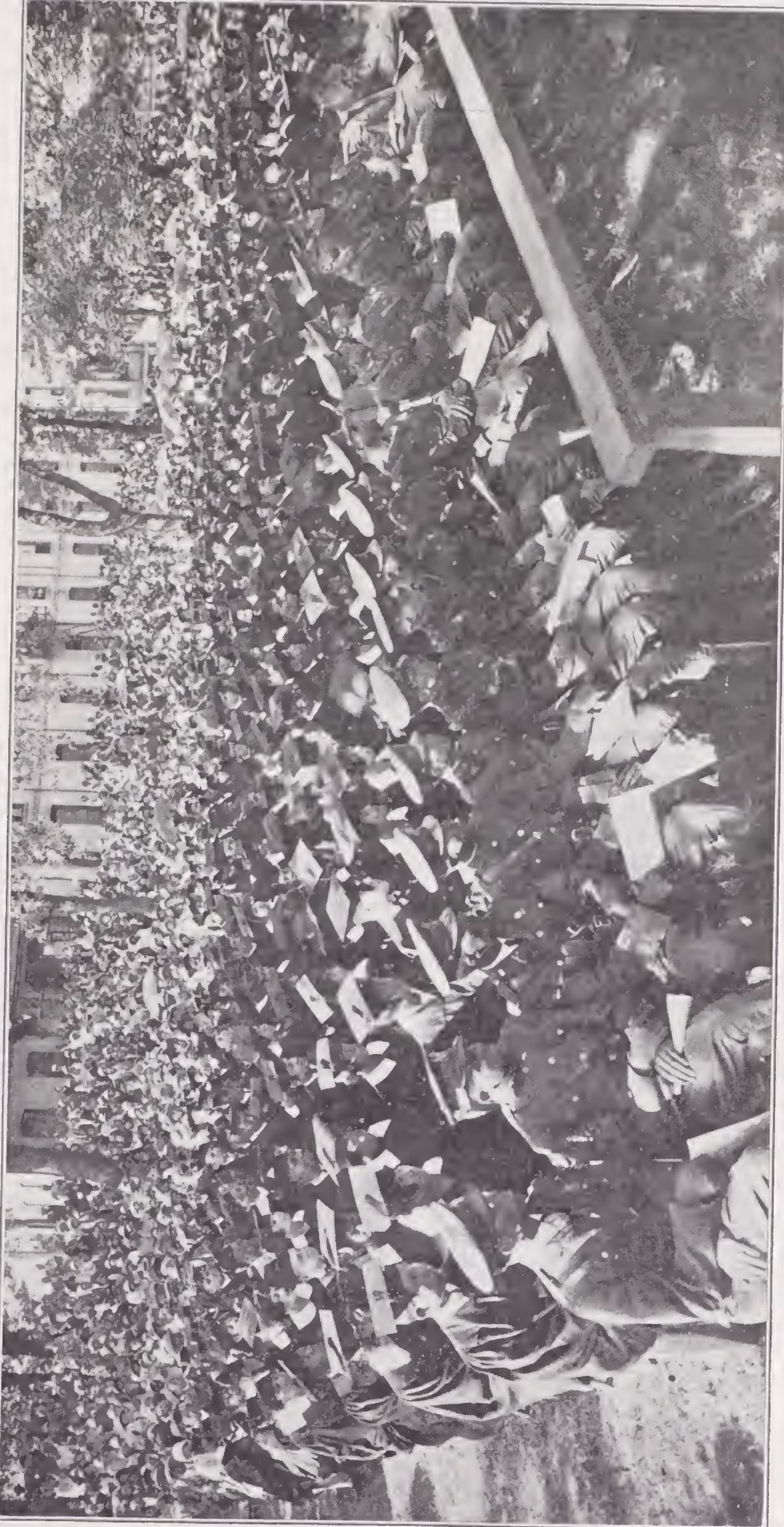
on considerable magnitude. until now we have the National Open Championship and Interscholastic Track Meet, to which representatives are sent from the various colleges of the country.

Baseball is one of the waning athletic activities of Howard. However, a varsity team is fostered yearly by the Board of Athletic Control and games are played with such colleges as Lincoln University, Virginia Union, Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute, etc.

Howard University has compulsory supervised physical education, stressing health, physical activity, and free recreation. It is interested primarily in the development of intra-mural activities. The campus of the University is now equipped with six tennis courts and is one of the nuclei of tennis among the colored people of Washington.

Throughout the entire school year the University meets the recreational needs of scores of colored persons through its athletics and other forms of entertainment, such as private dances, receptions, musicals and dramas. The University Chorus renders such musical numbers as, Coleridge-Taylor's "Hiawatha," Mendelssohn's "Elijah," and Handel's "Messiah," to the satisfaction of the most critical audiences.

A COMMENCEMENT AT HOWARD





## CHAPTER VII

### THE ARMSTRONG-DUNBAR COMPETITIVE MILITARY DRILL

THE COMPETITIVE DRILL between Armstrong and Dunbar High Schools is an annual event which lends as much color and ostentatiousness to the activities of the Negro population of Washington as any other annual affair. For not only does it command the attention of the entire Negro population, but it also creates a spirit of conflict between the adherents of the two schools, which conflict reinforces the spirit of patriotism and enthusiasm of the two sides. These forces make their overt manifestations through the medium of dress, decorations, and many other forms of pompous display.

#### ITS HISTORY

Before a clear and definite insight can be gained into the far-reaching influence of the competitive drill upon the interests and reactions of Negroes in Washington, it will be necessary to know something of its history and development. The author has adapted the following excerpt from "The Cadet," for 1926, a bulletin published annually under the direction of the Department of Military Science and Tactics, which presents the account of its history:

The first public appearance of the high school cadets was in an exhibition drill at Metropolitan Baptist Church in 1892. There was only one company under the command of Captain Albert Ridgeley, and the drill was given to secure funds with which to purchase equipment and to help make up a purse for the military instructor, a salary being unprovided at that time.

Under an Act of Congress, granting the loan of arms to colleges and high schools, the cadets were furnished necessary arms and equipment. Accordingly, November 1, 1892, the colored cadets were formally organized with one company having a membership of seventy boys.

Without overcoats, yet undeterred by morning blizzards and the frigid cold that followed on March 4th, 1893, the cadets formed a part of the escort to the outgoing President, Benjamin Harrison, and the President-Elect, Grover Cleveland, and afterwards marched in the Inaugural Parade. The reputation which the cadets had established was such that President Cleveland had made a special request that they be a part of his personal escort on that occasion. The cadets also marched in annual review before President Woodrow Wilson, formed a part of the Guard of Honor at the Inauguration of President Warren G. Harding, and have participated in practically every large military occasion in Washington.

In May 1893, the first competitive drill was held in the Metropolitan A.M.E. Church between two platoons, the first and second lieutenants commanding; there being only one company.

In 1895, a two-company battalion was formed, and the first competitive drill between companies was held at Convention Hall.

On May 24, 1897, the first field competitive drill was held at the National League Baseball Park with three companies competing.

In June, 1902, the first inter-school competitive drill between the old M Street School and Armstrong was held.

In June, 1917, the first Dunbar company entered the annual competitive drill. May 17, 1918, the third battalion for the first time, formed a part of the Washington High School cadet brigade in the annual review on the Ellipse. The brigade was reviewed by Major-General Peyton C. Marsh, Chief of Staff, United States Army; members of the Board of Education and District of Columbia officials. . . . In 1922 the designation of the cadet corps was changed from Third to the Twenty-fourth Regiment High School Cadets. In 1923 the regiment was composed of eleven companies—five Dunbar, five Armstrong, and one Junior High. In 1926 the regiment was increased to three battalions with all companies—five Dunbar and six Armstrong—and during this year the junior high schools were divorced from the Twenty-fourth Regiment and enlistment therein restricted to the senior high schools only.

Cadet officerships are awarded through competitive military examination and the United States Infantry Drill Regulations is used for instruction. Officers from the regular army and the District of Columbia National Guard serve each year as judges in the annual contests; and the names of the successive commanding officers, winning companies, winning captains, and winning schools are shown on a separate table. . . .

The Twenty-fourth Regiment of High School Cadets consists of three battalions, or eleven companies, and it is commanded by a lieutenant-colonel. The regiment is officered by forty-nine officers, who have won their commissions by general proficiency in scholarship and familiarity with the military training regulations. Any member of the corps who has served two years is eligible for a commission, though the majority of the officers have drilled three years. The staff of instructors is furnished by the War Department and the Board of Education from officers of the regular and reserve armies.

The officers and the men of the regiment drill hard in anticipation of the crowning event of the school year—the Annual Competitive Drill. This drill consist of two features; the com-

pany drill, inaugurated in 1895 and the battalion drill which got its start in 1922.

When the last company has completed its drill, which will be about four o'clock, the regiment will be formed in a line of close columns and presented to the reviewing officer who will then proceed to inspect it by passing around it, accompanied by the regimental commander. The regiment will then pass in review, after which it will return to the previous formation. Then will come the tense moment. The colonel will report to the judges, who will inform him which the prize battalion is, and he will then instruct his adjutant to "Present my compliments to Major X of the — Battalion. Inform him that he has won the drill, and instruct him to present his battalion to the judges." The adjutant will accordingly march to the center of the field and pause. This pause, which is for the purpose of creating even more suspense among both cadets and the rooters for the various schools represented, is one of the traditions of the corps. On the left of the adjutant, will be the First Battalion, composed of Dunbar companies; in front of him, the Second Battalion, composed of Armstrong companies; and on his right will be the Third Battalion, which is made up of Armstrong and Dunbar companies. When he moves off it will be either to the front, or to the left or right—in the direction of the winning battalion. Upon receiving the tidings, the major of the battalion which has been judged the most efficient, will proceed to present his unit to the judges. He will then receive the flag and a gold medal; the medal to be his personal property. The staff of the battalion will receive silver medals, and the other officers, red, white and blue badges.

The company competition carries more tradition with it, and the school represented by the victorious company in the annual competition is given credit by the public for having won the "drill." Because of this an even more dramatic scene is presented when the colonel reports to the judges to receive their decision as to the winning company. After getting the designation of this company, he again calls his adjutant and gives him his

instructions as before, substituting "Captain" for "Major" and "Company" for "Battalion." The adjutant goes through the same procedure as before and carries the news to the major of the battalion in which the prize company is. After the successful company has been presented to the judges, it will be presented with the Prize Flag; and the diamond-studded Teacher's Medal will be pinned on the tunic of its captain. This medal is worn until commencement, when it is returned and locked in the safe for the next year's winner. As permanent property the officers of the company will receive gold medals and the men will be given blue ribbon badges.

#### ITS SOCIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

When about nine hundred youths are in training in preparation for one of the most gala affairs that the Negroes of Washington witness, they are anticipating the representing of more than three thousand school mates, more than one hundred thousand Negro citizens of the District, and a host of alumni all over the United States. Moreover, the crowd to which they must address themselves on the day of the event will number more than twenty thousand. This is an occasion of great promise for each youth, if he makes good. This, indeed, in the true sense of the word, is a conflict, rather than a competition, for there is a conscious effort on the part of each participant to win from the opposing forces. The intense stimulation emanating from the rooter in particular, and the entire citizenry in general, sensitizes each man to a high degree of *esprit de corps*.

On the day of the drill thousands of colored pedestrians pass through the streets of the city, carrying the

colors of the school of their choice; hundreds of automobiles, elaborately decorated with school colors and loaded with a group of merrymakers race noisily through the streets, resounding the joy of their occupants. For the most part, this is a day off for the mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, sweethearts, and friends of the participants in the drill. It is a time when friends from various sections of the city meet and exchange experiences through free conversation; hence, it is a day when much of the pent-up energy of the year is released—a sort of catharsis is in operation—and the older people are restored to normalcy again.

The competitive drill not only accentuates the popularity of the winning school for the successive year by increasing attendance and strengthening the morale of the student body, but it enhances the status of the successful officers. This status which the individual wins in the competitive drill remains with him for many years. In all his future activities he is referred to as X, who won such and such a medal in the Dunbar-Armstrong Competitive Drill. Upon entrance to college, his status precedes him, and he is likely to be prospective material for a reputable fraternity. Hence, these achievements assist the individual tremendously in making a success in later life. If the halo which is thrown about the youth does not make him self-sufficient and satisfied with his premature status, he is almost certain to rise higher than the average youth in later life. The first captain of the first exhibition drill, is now a repu-

THE ARMSTRONG-DUNBAR COMPETITIVE MILITARY DRILL

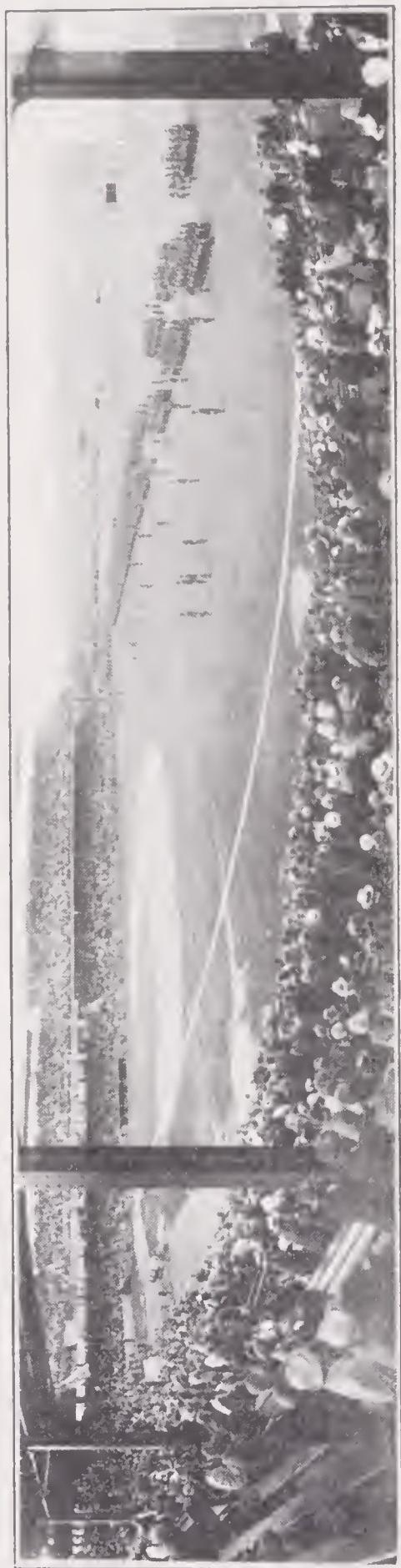




table physician in this city, Dr. Albert Ridgeley. Lieutenant-Colonel West Hamilton, one of the highest commissioned colored officers in the United States Army today, received the benefit of some of these sensations in his high school days.



## CHAPTER VIII

### INFORMAL RECREATION

THE MAJOR PORTION of the amusement life of the Negro population in Washington, as is true of every other racial group, is carried on through the medium of the more informal aspects of association. In fact, these are the most genuine forms of play because they involve participation on the part of the individual. He is not, in such instances, a mere *spectator*, but a *participant*. This type of recreation is carried on for the most part in face-to-face or direct contact groups, which may or may not lack permanency, and which are organized chiefly on the basis of suggestion, or other non-rational forms of interaction. Their motives often appear to be superficial. Their membership is not constant, but changes frequently. This transitory character of the membership of such groups can be accounted for in terms of their lack of definite organization. They are, however, natural groupings which organize themselves about a few strong personalities. They are prevalent in every community, and take the form of cliques, social sets, rings, etc. Bernard says:

They lack any definite organization, but practically every one understands the essential facts about membership, leadership, the scope of their activities, etc. Their main interests almost invariably center in the ritual of polite social intercourse, amusements,

fashion, eating, entertaining, and kindred activities. . . . Somewhat like these informal groups, but even more ephemeral, although perhaps frequently possessing a more serious purpose, are the temporary bazaars, picnics, receptions, dinners, and like assemblages, designed either for pleasure or to raise money for some cause. Their very transitory assemblies are frequently but not always organized within a "set" or "clique".<sup>1</sup>

#### THE BARBER SHOP

The barber shop is not generally regarded as a recreational center. It is operated as a commercial institution, but satisfies in a unique manner the cravings for leisure-time activity. Since it is not essentially a recreational agency, this survey did not take into consideration such factors as names, location, and equipment. Attention was given primarily to the study of forms of social interaction which take place in the barber shop. Our study disclosed, however, that fourteen Negro barber shops were located within the ten blocks from Fourth Street and Florida Avenue to Fourteenth and You Streets. Six of these shops were found to be equipped with electric pianos and three with radios. By comparison, it appears that the barber shop plays a larger rôle as a recreational institution among Negroes than it does among white people. This is perhaps due to the absence of other institutions, such as clubrooms, etc., which can satisfy the gregarious impulses. Nearly every Negro barber shop is a social center. And for certain classes of Negroes it furnishes a most satisfactory channel for social diver-

<sup>1</sup>L. L. Bernard, *Introduction to Social Psychology*, pp. 451-52.

sion. It is unlike any other institution in that it is a place where personal adornment is the chief consideration. Being adornment of the head and face, to man the most significant part of the body, it naturally calls attention to the *ego* and accentuates discussion of personal values. The conversation takes on a most human coloring, more so than that which occurs in informal parlor gatherings. Ridicule, flattery, mockery, argument, display through ornament and gesture, wit, humor, and jocularity are characteristic aspects of its life. Some of the best stories the writer has ever heard have been told in barber shops. The "dirty joke" was until recently the most characteristic form which stories took. Sex seems always to be uppermost in the minds of the barbers and patrons. Women who pass on the streets command attention and elicit considerable comment. That is to say, conversation is very spontaneous and informal and centers about any object or happening that is capable of capturing the attention of its employees and patrons. The social contact in the barber shop furnishes a mass of social news, chiefly of a local nature. Reports on the poker games and other festivities of the previous night are given to attentive and interested listeners. Strangers and persons who have been away from the city are likely to make the barber shop the first place of visitation. Old acquaintances are renewed and new ideas are advanced.

There has come a radical change in the conduct and conversation of the male patrons of the barber shop with the introduction of women into its group of customers. Much of the crudity and vulgarity has dis-

appeared or has been superseded by a more euphemistical type of socialization. Nevertheless, the barber shop remains a most significant institution for informal recreation. As a social and recreational institution it plays a greater rôle in the Negro community than it does as a pure commercial agency.

#### THE RESTAURANT

The restaurant is another institution which operates on the basis of economic considerations, but renders indirectly a greater service as an informal recreational center. Here stimulation is limited largely to visual perception, and the conversation is narrowed to the group of two or more persons. There is little or no public discussion such as that which characterizes the barber shop; nor is it, in the same degree, confined to personalities. Not quite such strong egoistic behavior is found in the average cafe or restaurant as is manifested in the beauty parlor or barber shop. The joviality and humor conform more strictly to conventional standards. In general it may be said that the behavior found here is much less naïve and spontaneous than that of the barber shop. In the former the presence of both sexes results in the establishment of regulation and control over its life. Since eating is one of the most pleasant experiences that the individual enjoys, the restaurant possesses the most congenial atmosphere to be found anywhere. Laughing, conversing, observing, flirting, etc., constitute the principal forms of socialization.

## STREET STIMULATION

The streets of our great cities exploit the impulses of human beings. The busy thoroughfares with their massive crowds, noises, and varied sights function as re-creative agencies by supplying new experience for the individual. Probably no other phase of city life has the magnetic influence over human behavior that the city streets exercise. The following familiar characterization of the adolescent girl is an index, somewhat, to the power which the urban street exercises over the lives of individuals: "She quarrelled with her mother, put on her coat, and went out onto the street." The street is the symbol of life. It is that along which human nature travels, and it satisfies to some extent the craving for new and thrilling experience.

Street life is transient. This explains why it appeals. It furnishes the new, the fine, and the sordid. This variety of stimuli satisfies practically every human interest and desire. The shrieking of the sirens, the clanging of bells, the dense traffic, the flood of lights, the markets, the music stores with their outside amplifiers, accidents—all an ever-changing scene—this is what places street life among the foremost recreational forces in the city. The home with its tameness and conventionality finds difficulty in competing with the city streets. This is especially true of the disorganized home. Street life is a maze of changing social stimuli. It presents new situations, brings strangers into contact, generates definite interests, and creates new desires.

It cannot be questioned that a great deal of street life contains influences that work continuously to produce anti-social conduct. The excessively high percentage of Negro crime in Washington has as one of its causative factors the infective environment of the street. Jane Addams in speaking of the evil effects of street life upon the youth says:

The newly awakened senses are appealed to by all that is gaudy and sensual, by the flippant street music, the highly colored theater posters, the trashy love stories, the feathered hats, the cheap heroics of the revolvers displayed in the pawn-shop windows. This fundamental susceptibility is thus evoked without a corresponding stir of the higher imagination, and the result is as dangerous as possible.<sup>1</sup>

The following excerpt gives an additional description of the characteristics of the life in the city streets:

Crowds generally form in the streets or in public places. Their formation is often accidental or involuntary, the source of attention frequently being as trivial as a street accident or fight, the trick of a publicity-seeking fakir, or a traffic jam. A street speaker may gather around him on a summer night scores of desultory wanderers, more or less disreputable in character and of low intellectual attainments. If he is a skilled orator he may be able to hold and augment his group and even throw them into the frenzy of a mob, inciting them to wreck buildings or other property.<sup>2</sup>

In Washington there are such streets as DeFrees, Jackson Place, Eighth Street between Barry Place and

<sup>1</sup>Jane Addams, *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets*, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup>L. L. Bernard, *Introduction to Social Psychology*, p. 459.

Euclid Streets, Franklin, Seaton, Myrtle, and Six and a Half. It is in these districts that organizations of gangsters and young toughs flourish and where disreputable pool rooms and other criminal hangouts are plentiful.

#### GANGS, CLIQUES, AND CLUBS

These organizations usually develop gradually out of play groups. They are relatively permanent groups existing for the purpose of giving expression to like-minded and self-conscious individuals. The gang is characterized by subordination to well-defined leadership, *esprit de corps*, morale, mobility, and thirst for adventure. The formation of gangs gives further evidence of the inevitable craving for new experience in the young pre-adolescent and adolescent boy. It is an attempt to intensify experience, to introduce more of the exciting element into life. The gang is almost wholly an anti-social group. It differs from the old play group from which it sprang in that it has a different type of behavior in view. The spectacular anti-social behavior which these groups have in view is really what changes any form of association into a gang. The term "gang" connotes behavior or conduct that crosses the borderline of morality, law, and social standard. Thrasher gives the following characterization of gang behavior:

Gangs represent the spontaneous effort of boys to create a society for themselves where none adequate to their needs exists. What boys get out of such association that they do not get otherwise under the conditions that adult society imposes is the thrill and zest of participation in common interests, more es-

pecially in corporate action, in hunting, capture, conflict, flight, and escape. Conflict with other gangs and the world about them furnishes the occasion for many of their exciting group activities.<sup>1</sup>

The main function of the gang is to furnish an avenue by which its members can gain not only new but daring experience. In this sense the gang is essentially a recreational institution. Scientific students of society have probably never fully realized the extent to which defiance of the mores and acting in contravention of laws arouse and satisfy some of the deepest emotional cravings, and supply some of the most enjoyable thrills. This daring, adventurous side of gang life is that which gives to such organizations recreational significance.

In Washington, no highly organized boys' gangs were found, i.e., having constitutions, rituals, initiation ceremonies, and a definite seat, or headquarters. Negro boys' groups, taken as a whole, have not reached to any extent this high degree of organization. Most of them exist by spontaneous origin and random purpose and procedure. The nearest to an organized Negro gang discovered in the course of the investigation was one which has long since disbanded. It bore the name "Black Hawks." A search brought to light remnants of its records which included a roll book, a rather crude ritual, and the records of the treasurer, showing the incomes and disbursements of the organization. This gang was not stationary, but, seemingly, operated over a rather wide geographical area of the city. Its chief activities,

<sup>1</sup>Frederick Thrasher, *The Gang*, p. 37.

so far as they could be ascertained, consisted of flogging boys who were not members of the "we group," especially those who attempted to encroach upon the gang's territory for the purpose of seeking the company of some coveted girl. In addition to this, some petty stealing was carried on, such as taking fruit off wagons, throwing missiles at windows, etc.

This gang seems to have disintegrated for two reasons. First, its powerful leader, who was a person of prestige and a quick-witted boy who could command the respect and loyalty of his followers by his ability to fight, plan, think, and execute more effectively than the other boys, finally got interested in the opposite sex and lost his interest in the gang. The loss of a strong leader broke the morale of the group. Second, a number of the boys entered high school where they got new lines of interest and, hence, lost their enthusiastic loyalty to the gang.

There are in Washington a great many spontaneous, short-lived colored boys' gangs, arising in the interest of seeking new experience and adventure. The existence of a large number of such forms of association emphasizes the need of more organization and direction of the collective behavior of the Negro youth in Washington.

#### INFORMAL SOCIAL SETS AND CLUBS

The bulk of informal recreation in Washington seems to take place through the avenues of innumerable clubs; social, fraternal, athletic, and political. A few of the

familiar names which these clubs bear are as follows: "Mu-So-Lit," "Bluebirds," "Bachelor-Benedict," "Back Biters," "Earls," "What Good Are We," and Buggy Riders." These clubs find their chief reason for existence in amusement and recreation.

These organizations are exclusive and undemocratic, but they perform the essential function of grouping individuals into like-minded aggregates. One of their noteworthy characteristics is the exclusion of certain individuals from membership. In this sense, they set up social standards which many struggle to meet. These are not necessarily moral standards which condition membership. In most instances they are "interest," or "consciousness-of-kind" standards. The struggle to conform to these social ideals is one of the most potent forces enhancing progress in the life of any community.

#### THE SOCIAL ARTS: MUSIC, PAGEANTRY, AND DRAMA

These all afford excellent means of social contact and corporate action, and are important avenues for the development of self-expression.

*Music.* Music appeals to the emotions, and is one of the most effective means by which psychological unison can be secured in any group. There seems to be no doubt even in the minds of the most critical scientific students of the question that the Negro is temperamentally musical as a race, i.e., more so than the white man. His improvisation of the spirituals and syncopation, together with many other evidences of native musical and



A FORMAL BANQUET

THE MARTINIQUE CLUB  
October 26, 1923



histrionic talent, are raising him to a unique position in the artistic life of America.

Musical concerts given both by individuals and choral societies are of frequent occurrence in Washington. Most of the Negro communities expressing their life through such institutions as churches and community centers, foster choral societies, choruses, orchestras, and bands. Among the choral societies the two outstanding ones are the Howard University and the Coleridge-Taylor.

Music renders the service of welding together socially disorganized communities and neighborhoods. It is an artifice for breaking down mechanical artificial barriers. Choral singing seems to bring the people of any community into a certain sympathy with each other. It affords an opportunity for participation and expression.

*Pageantry.* As a form of art and recreation, pageantry is not highly developed among Negroes in Washington. Aside from the May Day festivities held at Howard University, community centers, and public schools, little is done in this field of endeavor. There is considerable evidence that this recreational expression needs to be encouraged and developed. Pageantry is an instrument of education and social betterment. That is, it has a propagandic aspect. Most pageants are historical and the study which is necessary to put such an exhibit upon the stage has an inestimable educational value. The community experiences the elements of social reform while busy coöperating in the work of production. His-

torical pageantry is a preserver of rich traditions of the past, and renders an invaluable recreative service in permitting the members of the community to be sharers in the process of its creation. Aside from pageantry, athletic games are almost the only remaining forms of recreation in which great numbers of people actually participate. In practically all other cases amusement and entertainment are furnished by paid professionals. Theatrical and concert performances are usually presented by persons who are specialists, and the majority know nothing of what they see and hear except from the point of view of the spectator. By way of contrast may be set over against this statement the following excerpt:

But fortunately, this is not true of pageantry. Its whole point lies in the fact that it is not, and cannot be the work of a single individual. It is a coöperative art in which there is opportunity for all to share according to the measure of their time and skill. Further, pageantry is a rational and gorgeous form of recreation, a sane outlet for the unconquerable play spirit which, when lacking outlets, may become a source of danger instead of a benefit.<sup>1</sup>

#### PARKS, MUSEUMS, AND LIBRARIES

This aspect of the field of recreation has a distinct educational value. There are few other avenues by which the Negro urbanite can gain such easy access to the highest artistic and intellectual aspects of the culture of the white race than the museums and libraries. Moreover, these are avenues which, in the city of Wash-

<sup>1</sup>Mary Porter Beegle and Jack Randall Crawford, *Community Drama and Pageantry*, pp. 15-16.

ton, are not closed to colored people. The White House, Capitol, Public Library, Library of Congress, Corcoran Art Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, National Museum, Navy Department, Government Printing Office, Bureau of Engraving, Botanical Garden, Arlington Cemetery, Zoological Park, Mount Vernon, and a number of other public places are open to all races. Visits to such places are edifying and elevating. A very small percentage of Washington's Negro population, however, visits these cultural centers. Close observation over a period of six months established the fact that on an average, not more than two colored persons a day view the reading room of the Library of Congress from the gallery. A rather large number, however, make use of its reading facilities.

Those who visit Mt. Vernon usually do so as members of special outing trips. From a number of observations it was discovered that Negroes make use of the Public Library in large numbers, but chiefly in the form of students doing required work, rather than as leisure-time readers.

A rather wide use of the public parks, Zoological Park, and Botanical Garden is made by Washington's Negro population. In these public places there is no discrimination other than the usual manifestations of race prejudice. Both races mingle freely, but are careful about maintaining their social distances. There has only been one instance when officials openly discriminated against Negroes. This occurred one Easter Sunday morning when Colonel C. O. Sherrill, then Superintendent of Public Buildings and Grounds, placed jim-crow

signs in the largest of the public parks, as an act unprecedented since the Emancipation.<sup>1</sup>

It has become something of a general practice for colored people to take possession of Rock Creek Park the first Monday after every Easter. White people, seem to understand that this is the Negroes' day and either remain at home or go elsewhere.

McMillan Park, located east of Howard University and surrounding the New Reservoir, has now been taken over almost exclusively by Negroes.

The pleasure parks, however, are restrictive. Glen Echo caters only to members of the white race. The Surburban Gardens operates for Negroes. It is an amusement park, located in the northeast section of the District of Columbia in what is known as Deanwood, on a car line and boulevard. The park comprises seven acres of land and is equipped with over a mile of macadam roadway together with other twenty concessionaires, booths, and pavilions. In addition to a large dancing pavilion, there is a caterpillar, a coaster, an areo-swing, a ferris wheel, a dogem, a frolic, a tumble-bug, and a fully-equipped free children's playground. The park is in its sixth year of operation with both business and equipment improving. During the late spring and summer the park does a good business. It is not frequented to a great extent, however, by the upper classes of Negroes. The park is owned and operated by the Board of Directors of the Universal Development and Loan Com-

<sup>1</sup>See *Washington Tribune*, December 19, 1925.



THE SUBURBAN GARDENS



pany, a Negro corporation, which is also developing Universal Heights, an area of sixty-five acres surrounding the park.

#### RECREATION IN THE HOME

The home is the ideal center of informal recreation. It symbolizes relaxation and spontaneity. It is the one place where the individual can shake off his formality, free himself, more or less, from conventionality and become natural. This release from the tension required in adjusting oneself to formal social life, and the return to free spontaneous behavior, is what makes the home the most unique recreational agency in society. A very large percentage of the individual's leisure time is spent at home. Sundays, holidays, and evenings are periods of recreation, relaxation, and amusement. In many homes they are extremely dull periods, because no provisions are made for the wholesome utilization of so much spare time. The poorly-furnished, unclean, or untidy home cannot act as an ideal rendezvous for the weary members of the family. Hence, they can hardly be regarded as true centers of recreation. Two or three small, poorly lighted and heated rooms and a hall do not lend themselves readily to privacy, comforts, and home parties. Hence, the inhabitants of such homes must seek their recreation separately and outside of the home, usually in pool rooms, dance halls, or theatres. On the other hand, those homes which are adequately equipped provide privacy for relaxation and comfort for reading and other forms of recreation. In the well-organized

home, the children and young people find wholesome use which they can make of their free time. They may receive and entertain their friends at parties and "socials," or play among themselves in the house or on the lawn under the oversight of some mature member of the family. The games of children in the home are perhaps more important for the social development of the child than the activities in which it participates on the playgrounds, because they express his more natural interests and attitudes. The privacy and intimacy of the family and the closeness of contact of its members make possible the free expression of the personality.

Six hundred and sixty-one Negro homes were studied in this survey in order to ascertain the extent to which they were equipped for recreational purposes. Five hundred and forty-six of these six hundred and sixty-one homes had either a piano or phonograph, or both; two hundred and seventy-eight were equipped with radios; five hundred and eighty-nine subscribed to one or more newspapers and magazines. These facts indicate the extent to which the Negro home in Washington is equipped to meet in some form the recreational needs of its members. In certain sections of Southwest Washington one's attention is especially attracted to the large number of dilapidated, poorly-furnished, badly-ventilated, and badly-lighted houses, which are equipped with radios. Likewise, the presence of a piano in the majority of homes is further evidence of the consideration which the Negro family gives to entertainment and amusement.

In the highly cultured Negro home extensive pro-

visions are made for the leisure-time activities of the family. Here expensive toys for children, private ball-rooms, large libraries, subscriptions to a large number of Negro and white newspapers and magazines, and sometimes two or more automobiles are found. One thousand homes were studied to ascertain the percentage of homes having automobiles. Six hundred and twenty-seven of these families owned or were buying cars. A large number of these cars when purchased are "used cars;" nevertheless, they are a valuable asset to the home and to the life of the family.



**PART II**

**COMMERCIALIZED RECREATION**

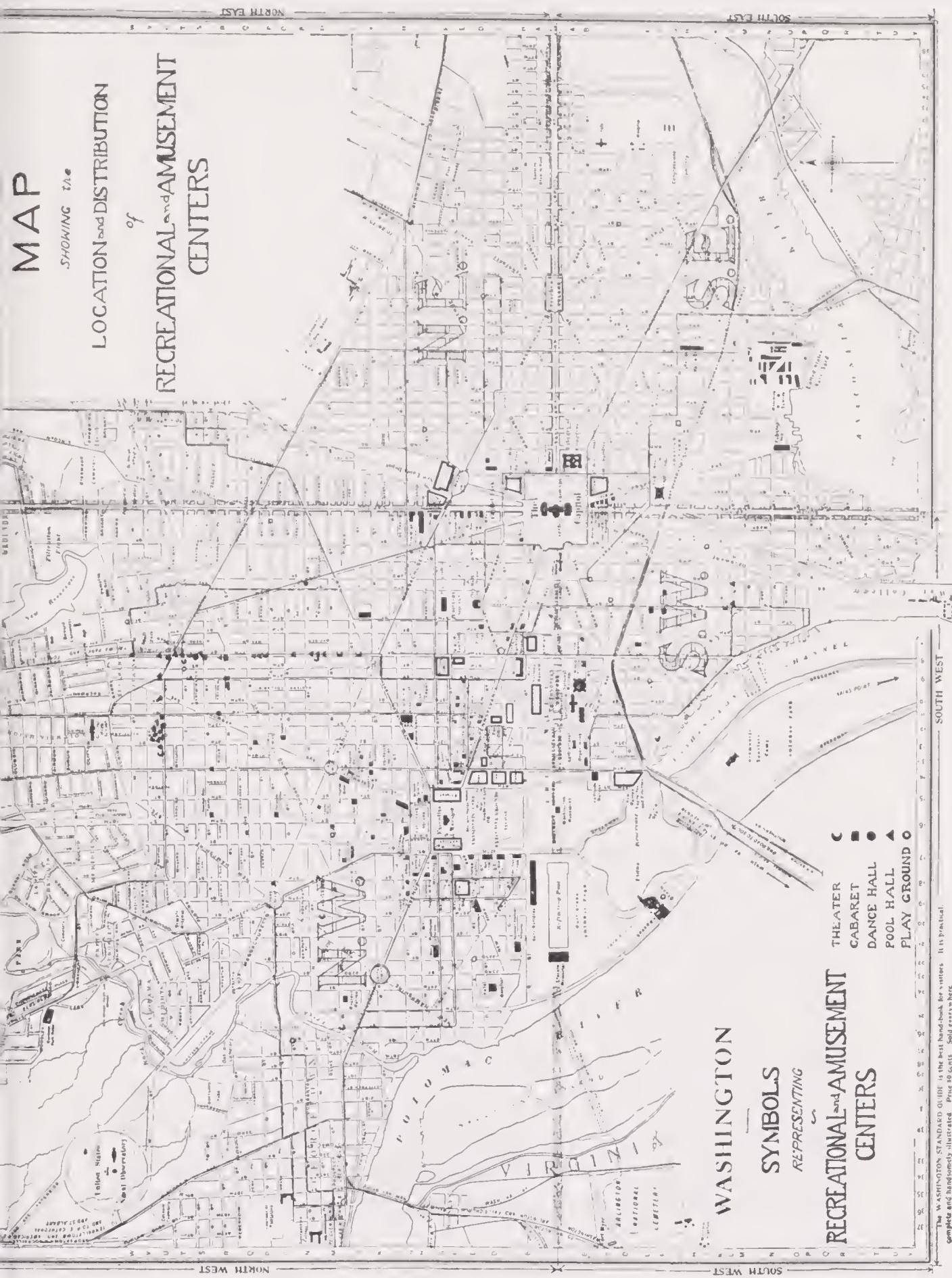


MAP

SHOWING THE

LOCATION AND DISTRIBUTION

# RECREATIONAL *and* AMUSEMENT CENTERS



A map showing the location and distribution of recreation and amusement centers in relation to other institutions



## CHAPTER IX

### THE THEATER

#### ITS RÔLE AS A SOCIALIZING AGENCY

THE ESSENTIAL RÔLE OF the theater in the life of the community is scarcely known even to scientific students of society, because its influences are so subtle and unconscious. On the surface, it is generally conceived as an institution which affords a degree of entertainment. But it performs a much wider function in the influence which it exerts upon the personality-building process, not only in the actual mechanism of imitating models, but also in the content of the personality itself. The theater stands in a class by itself as an institution which brings the remote phases of culture into the immediate social life of a community. It represents a concrete personal or impersonal carrier of distance contacts. The propagandist, the moral reformer, and the artist have had their influences extended and transformed by the modern theater, the radio, and the movie. The movie especially has multiplied infinitely the messages of people at a distance. The message is not merely presented in words but in vivid graphic pictures to the eye. Hence, the theater has a recreational and cultural significance which few, if any other social institutions, possess. Men

and women from other social worlds speak and perform for thousands of people from a distance through this agency.

The theater, in presenting life artistically and idealistically, helps to define the wishes, attitudes, and interests of the members of society. It causes individuals to become more cosmopolitan and well-rounded. It is perhaps, one of the most destructive forces to bigotry and conservatism which operates in community life. Wider conceptions of morals are presented to the individual from the stage and the screen, offsetting in many instances the more dangerous reactionary conceptions of the bigoted but influential moral custodians. Few other institutions have given as much tolerance to Negro community life as has the theater through its production of a wider understanding of human life everywhere.

The theater is also an agency of cultural diffusion. Patterns of behavior which it presents, slogans and catchy phrases, songs, and jokes are disseminated by movies, vaudeville, and burlesque shows. Some of the principal song-fads that have characterized Negro life in Washington during the past three years have had their beginnings in the Howard Theater.

Individuals attend theaters to find adventure and to express the impulses and wishes which their own limited powers or conventionalized inhibitions prevent them from realizing in their own actual lives. In cases where the individual's real life articulates at times that portrayed on the screen or stage, he nevertheless resorts to the theater either for adventure and expression of that

same sort, or for the sake of seeing himself reflected in the film or play. It may possibly be that he does this in order that he may receive further stimulation and confirmation in organizing a personality of this type.

The significance of the theater is well described in the following excerpt:

As regards the movies, one point in their favor has been noted. They are accessible and available. They satisfy vicariously the love of adventure, the roaming instinct, the delight in the new and the strange and wonderful. They are absorbing, diverting the weary soul from its troubles. They relieve the strain from the will by the plot interest, which carries the observer along without effort. They bring a glimpse of fairy land into some lives that are drab and prosy. Those who cannot even dance may here participate in the sight of dancing. To those who have no beauty in their daily surroundings, beauty is brought in many forms upon the screen.<sup>1</sup>

Much of the seeking for adventure which the individual does is unconscious, even so much so that he himself would deny it altogether. From consultations with a number of individuals, it was found that most people explain this interest in terms that are relatively meaningless, such as an expressed craving for amusement. But the student of human nature can establish just as close a relation between amusement and the functional phases of life as any other activity in the process of the adjustment of the individual to the environment.

This tendency to resort to the theater for the purpose of finding expression of unrealized impulses and the

<sup>1</sup>G. T. W. Patrick, "The Play of a Nation," *Scientific Monthly*, XIII, 359 (1921).

consequent result of building up through imitation a personality similar in content to that portrayed in drama, applies to both social and anti-social characters. Any movie or burlesque show or drama that awakens the impulses and releases wishes is never without effect upon the personalities of those who witness it. The images are so concrete and the emotional quality of the situations and the language is so powerful that it inevitably conditions responses in kind similar to those presented in the play. The models of life presented by the average movie or vaudeville are easily grasped because they are never abstract. Rather, the images are quite concrete and the subject matter is almost wholly objective behavior, i.e., action and emotional expression. Hence, the individual responds to it readily, and it enters into his psychic mechanisms, where it may lie dormant as raw material for future action. It becomes released into action when the individual finds himself under the suggestion of powerful stimuli which seem to be directed at these dormant conditioners.

The theater is, therefore, a powerful conditioner of the thoughts and behavior of a community. It furnishes models of behavior, and awakens through suggestibility both social and anti-social impulses, with the result that it is frequently held responsible by the public for much of the crime, delinquency, vice, and other anti-social reactions of society. This is clearly pointed out in the following excerpt:

In passing, we should also note that the theater as a form of recreation has some influence upon juvenile criminality. The boy

who witnesses the melodramatic plays and pictures in the theaters and moving picture shows which depict crimes and acts of violence may be stimulated thereby to try to imitate these acts. This is not likely to happen to the healthy, normal boy who has plenty of opportunity for healthful and active recreation in which he can expend all his surplus energy and can satisfy his desire for excitement and adventure. But the city boy who lacks these opportunities may be led into attempts to imitate these acts, while any boy who is somewhat abnormal physically and mentally in such a way as to be unusually suggestible is likely to make these attempts.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to its influence upon the individual and society, through its melodrama, sex appeal, and other forms of subtle suggestibility, the theater seems to bear some relation to the gregarious reactions of the members of a community. The theaters are points at which intense socialization goes on. The crowds that frequent the larger theaters, because of their magnetic influence, draw along with them a group that is not seeking its new experience and adventure from what is going on inside, but which prefers to remain on the outside and form a cordon about the theater. The members of such groups secure their recognition by making themselves noticeable to spectators. They are seeking, chiefly, recognition and new experience; and in order to receive it, they are often compelled to resort to unconventional forms of "showing-off" and display. These individuals are highly self-conscious and are suffering from an excessive degree of *the desire for recognition*. They form quite a problem for the leading theaters because they furnish the best

<sup>1</sup>Maurice Parmelee, *Criminology*, p. 227.

settings in which such individuals can flourish. A few years ago, the manager of one of the leading movie houses christened this type of individual with the objectionable epithet, "Skunk Molly." A campaign was waged against them by the management of this same theater and the number was temporarily reduced. But the "Skunk Molly" is a "natural type," one who in his social manifestations is gaining a measure of satisfaction of some of his dominant wishes. For this reason, he is difficult to annihilate. This human moth who flies about the flame is responding to the stimulation and magnetism of the theater functioning as a social institution. This fact alone is indicative of the significance of the theater in the social life of the community.

#### PHOTOPLAY HOUSES

Fifteen moving picture theaters were studied in this survey. They may be variously classified, such as on the basis of physical structure, type of entertainment, class of people who attend, kinds of ownership, etc. The following classification attempts to take into consideration all of the above factors and to provide a brief description of each:

##### *Class A*

(a) *Lincoln Theater*. This theater is located on You Street between Twelfth and Thirteenth Streets, Northwest. It was opened in February of 1922 under Negro management. Until 1927 it was owned by the famous Crandall Theater Corporation which had thirteen Ne-

gro stockholders. The theater was purchased in 1927 by the Howard-Lincoln Theater Corporation which operates both the Lincoln and Howard theaters for Negroes. The seating capacity of the Lincoln theater is 1600. During the year 1924 there were admitted 794,000 persons. It is a first-run picture house, featuring National and Metro-Goldwyn releases. The heating is both direct and indirect. Direct heat is sent through radiators. One hundred tons of coal are kept in reserve in case of coal shortage. Eight big fans can be arranged either to draw fresh air or to expel foul air. One big ten-foot fan, known as the Master Fan draws fresh air both winter and summer. The winter air is blown through a spray which heats it to seventy degrees. In the summer the air is passed through a spray which cools it to forty degrees. This theater receives its lighting current from the Potomac Electric Power Co. It is equipped with a generator, seventy ampere, for furnishing light for the moving picture machines. The operating room is equipped with two modern machines. A fan is placed in the room to keep it cool. The two men who are employed in the operating room receive good salaries. The theater is equipped with ten principal dressing rooms, one property room, two lavatories for women, two for men, and one for the orchestra. The entire building is fireproof. It has \$519,000.00 invested in it. It occupies 24,000 square feet of ground. The Manuel Mohler organ was installed when the theater was opened. It is operated by Mr. Louis N. Brown, concert organist. The daily overhead and operating expenses are \$315.00. Admission prices

are as follows: Matinee—adults, fifteen cents; children, ten cents. Night—orchestra, thirty-five cents; balcony, twenty cents; loge, forty cents.

(b) *Republic Theater*. This theater is located on You Street between Thirteenth and Fourteenth Streets, Northwest. It is owned by a white company in which there are twenty Negro stockholders. This theater has modern equipment and is patronized by a select group of colored people. There were approximately 400,000 people admitted during the year 1926. The prices for admission are ten cents for matinee and twenty and thirty cents for the night shows.

#### *Class B*

(a) *Broadway Theater*. This theater is located on Seventh Street near P Streets, Northwest. It is managed by the owner, a Negro, Mr. Rufus G. Byars. This theater has a seating capacity of five hundred. The manager stated that the average weekly attendance is 4,500, and the average yearly attendance is 234,000. The pictures shown are second runs but of the best releases, and afford an excellent opportunity for those who have missed them at other theaters. During a portion of the year 1926-27 this theater featured monthly a Negro production. This program received the highest approval of the patrons. The prices of admission are as follows: week days—adults, fifteen cents; children, ten cents; Sundays and holidays—twenty cents.



THE REPUBLIC THEATER



THE LINCOLN THEATER



(b) *Foraker Theater.* This theater is located at 1112 Twentieth Street, Northwest. The ownership could not be ascertained but the managers are Negroes. The seating capacity is approximately five hundred. The patrons are of the middle class. It has direct ventilation, that is, by open windows and doors. The two lavatories are in the rear of the theater and are kept fairly clean. The type of show is very ordinary, both pictures and vaudeville being featured. A first class picture is occasionally "sandwiched" in between the regular ones. The vaudeville consists of black-faced comedians, dancing girls, and jazz singers. The jokes are always within the universe of discourse of the class of patrons who attend. This theater has recently re-opened under new management and is attracting rather large crowds. It has two or three shows an evening.

(c) *Dunbar Theater.* This theater is located on Tea Street near Seventh Street, Northwest. It is owned by the Crescent Amusement Company, a Negro corporation. It is under the management of Mr. Raymond Murray. It has a seating capacity of 395. The approximate attendance, except during the summer months, is 700 daily. This theater features motion pictures only, the western type chiefly. Ventilation and sanitary conditions are inadequate and the floors and furniture are not kept free from dust. The performance begins at two P.M. and continues through until eleven P.M. The prices of admission are as follows: matinee—adults and children, ten cents; night—adults and children, fifteen cents.

*Class C*

(a) *Gem Theater.* This theater is located on Seventh Street between L and M Streets, Northwest. Both ownership and management are white. It has a seating capacity of three hundred and fifty-six. Ventilation is very poor. The pictures shown are of the ordinary type, and the patrons are boisterous and emotional. Negroes are segregated by a partition separating them from the white patrons. The admission prices are ten cents for children and fifteen cents for adults.

(b) *Mid-City Theater.* This theater is located on Seventh Street in the twelve hundred block. It is owned and managed by Negroes, and has a seating capacity of two hundred and fifty. For ventilation purposes there are twelve electric fans and four outlets in the roof. The type of vaudeville and movies is not up to the standard. The patrons are, for the most part, uneducated and emotional. There are three performances a day. The average nightly attendance is two hundred and fifty. The price of admission for all over ten years of age is twenty cents; children under ten years are admitted free.

(c) *Jewel Theater.* This theater is on Four and One-Half Street, Southwest. It is managed by Negroes and the property is probably owned by Negroes. It has a seating capacity of approximately four hundred. The patrons are mostly of the shiftless class, mainly boys and young men who seek amusement in low class theaters and pool rooms. The shows consist principally of

pictures of the "wild west" type, with an occasional good picture. The price of admission is twenty cents for adults and children.

(d) *Florida Theater.* This theater was located at Fifteenth and H Streets, Northeast. It was closed during the summer of 1925, and scheduled to re-open in September. However, it has been sold and has been converted into a garage. It had colored ownership. With the closing of this theater, the Northeast section, like the Southeast section of the city, is now without a theater.

(e) *The Blue Mouse Theater.* This theater is located at Twenty-sixth and M Streets, Northwest. The ownership of the property could not be ascertained, but it has a Negro manager. The seating capacity is four hundred. The ventilation is direct, that is, it is from three or four windows on each side of the theater. The doors may be left open also as a means of ventilation. This theater is situated among a rather rough class of people. About two-thirds of the patrons are young boys. The type of entertainment here consist of both pictures and vaudeville, featuring local talent. The pictures are of the mediocre type, featuring such actors as "Buck Jones," "Tom Mix," etc. Occasionally a high-class picture is shown, but only after it has "gone the rounds" elsewhere. The lavatories are located at the side of the stage so that those wishing to enter must pass to the front of the room before the audience. The price of admission is twenty cents.

(f) *Happyland Theater.* Located on Seventh Street in the block between New York Avenue and L Street, Northwest. It is owned and managed by white persons. The seating capacity is 236. The ceiling is low, hence, the ventilation is very poor. On the whole, the building is very poorly kept. It has a mixed patronage, the whites and Negroes being separated by a partition. There are six performances daily. Here also the "wild west" type of picture is predominant. The patrons are of the lower classes. The prices of admission are fifteen cents for adults and ten cents for children.

(g) *Alamo Theater.* This theater is located on Seventh Street in the twelve hundred block. It is owned and managed by white persons. It has a seating capacity of 226. The ventilation is poor, although the ceiling is of average height. The movies and vaudeville are of a low type and the patrons are uneducated and extremely emotional. There are four performances daily. The prices of admission are fifteen cents for adults and ten cents for children.

(h) *Rosalia Theater.* This theater is located on F Street near Third Street, Southeast. It is under Negro management and has a seating capacity of three hundred and fifty. The equipment is good, but the floors are dirty and the building, on a whole, ill-kept. The price of admission is twenty cents.

#### PLAYHOUSES

(a) *The Belasco.* This theater is located at the corner of Lafayette Square and Madison Place, in the shadow

of the White House. It is owned and managed by the well-known Schubert Company, and is, therefore, up to their usual standard.

Colored patrons are admitted to this theater and are accommodated in the balcony and gallery from which it is difficult to see and hear. It was at this theater that Charles Gilpin made his initial appearance in Washington, in his renowned success, "The Emperor Jones." Only a small number of Negroes attend this theater, but they are generally of the upper classes.

(b) *The Howard Theater.* This theater is located on Tea Street near Seventh Street, Northwest. It is owned by a New York Theater corporation, having one Negro stockholder. It is under Negro management. It has a seating capacity of 1202 and is patronized by all classes of theatrical enthusiasts. The principal type of show is the musical comedy, featuring the famous "blues" singers, such as Mamie Smith, and "high-brown" dancing girls. The ventilation is direct, there being exhaust fans and ceiling fans. The theater is kept very clean. Prices of admission are: matinee—thirty cents; night show—thirty, fifty, and seventy-five cents; midnight show—fifty and seventy-five cents and one dollar.

(c) *The Gayety Theater.* This theater is located at 511 Ninth Street, Northwest. It is owned and managed by white persons and operated primarily for white patrons, but Negroes are admitted to the balcony where a special section is provided for them. The seats are long benches with very straight and high backs. Smoking is

allowed in the balcony, and from the Negro section hearing is very difficult. It has a seating capacity in the balcony for Negroes of 450 with an average daily attendance of 200. The total seating capacity, however, is 1100. It is a burlesque house with second- or third-class vaudeville. Therefore, it caters to a middle-class of white people and a very ordinary-class of Negroes. The price of admission is thirty cents at all times.



A THEATRICAL COMPANY



## CHAPTER X

### DANCE HALLS AND MODERN DANCING

#### ANALYZED AS SOCIAL FORCES

THE DANCE HALLS are places where human nature achieves catharsis and relaxation. Here, behavior is more or less spontaneous and natural, and status is secured on superficialities. This explains to some extent the popularity of such places of amusement. Stimulation is directed principally at the emotional and impulsive life; the fundamental human motives are aroused, and sex excitement, though not always explicit, becomes the dominant factor. Dance hall behavior bears a close relation to character disorganization, since it represents a most intimate association of the sexes. Such forms of recreation easily become commercialized because their fundamental appeal is to original human nature.

The dance hall must not be regarded, however, as an essentially anti-social institution. In many instances it has been the seat of much romantic love of the most idealistic type. It affords, often, an opportunity for young people of every class to cultivate quickly an intimacy which may either lead them into finer forms of association, or farther still on the downward path to crime. In the dance hall the sociologist who seeks to know human nature may find a museum of types and a rich field for his investigation.

Aside from the cheap and stifling places, the trouble is not with the dance hall but with the dancing. Many of the modern dances are sexual pantomimes. They are similar to many of the ancient and primitive methods of publicly arousing human passions in preparation for lascivious orgies. A careful investigation disclosed the fact that the originators of these extreme forms of behavior have clearly in view a sexual end. A large amount of illicit sex behavior is unquestionably the natural sequence of certain modern forms of dancing. There is probably no other form of conventional and socially established behavior which has such a strong tendency toward demoralization as that of the dance hall. This is clearly shown by the necessity of the presence of chaperons and officers. The dance hall embraces an atmosphere in which the most powerful human impulses and emotions are functioning—jealousy, anger, fear, sex, love, pride—all render this form of socialization peculiarly susceptible to deterioration.

The rapidity and ease with which the anti-social forms of dancing spread upwards into and engross the so-called higher classes is additional evidence of the existence of a similar degree of the sensual element in all cultural strata. The absence of adequate bulwarks against the encroachment of such behavior forms upon the life of the more advanced groups of Negroes in Washington appears to be due to the fact that class stratification as a social process lacks many of those elements which might result in a more rigid exclusion of both questionable individuals and anti-social cultural patterns.

A Negro intellectual remarked to the writer that, while in attendance at one of the most prominent social events of Washington's Negro society, he noticed that there were present at the same event some of the most prominent and highly-cultured people in Washington and also the leading bootleggers of the city. This is only one of the many evidences of the inadequate social organization of Negro urban groups. Class stratification seems to be strong, but the basis on which it is made is weak.

An adequately organized public opinion would place such disapproval on the vulgar, sexually-suggestive modern dances that they would be compelled to confine themselves to the lower anti-social cultural groups in which they originated. Not only in Washington but in numerous other urban areas inhabited by large numbers of Negroes, the great need is for the development on the part of such groups of informal mechanisms of control whereby forces which tend to disintegrate and demoralize the higher forms of culture may be excluded or annihilated.

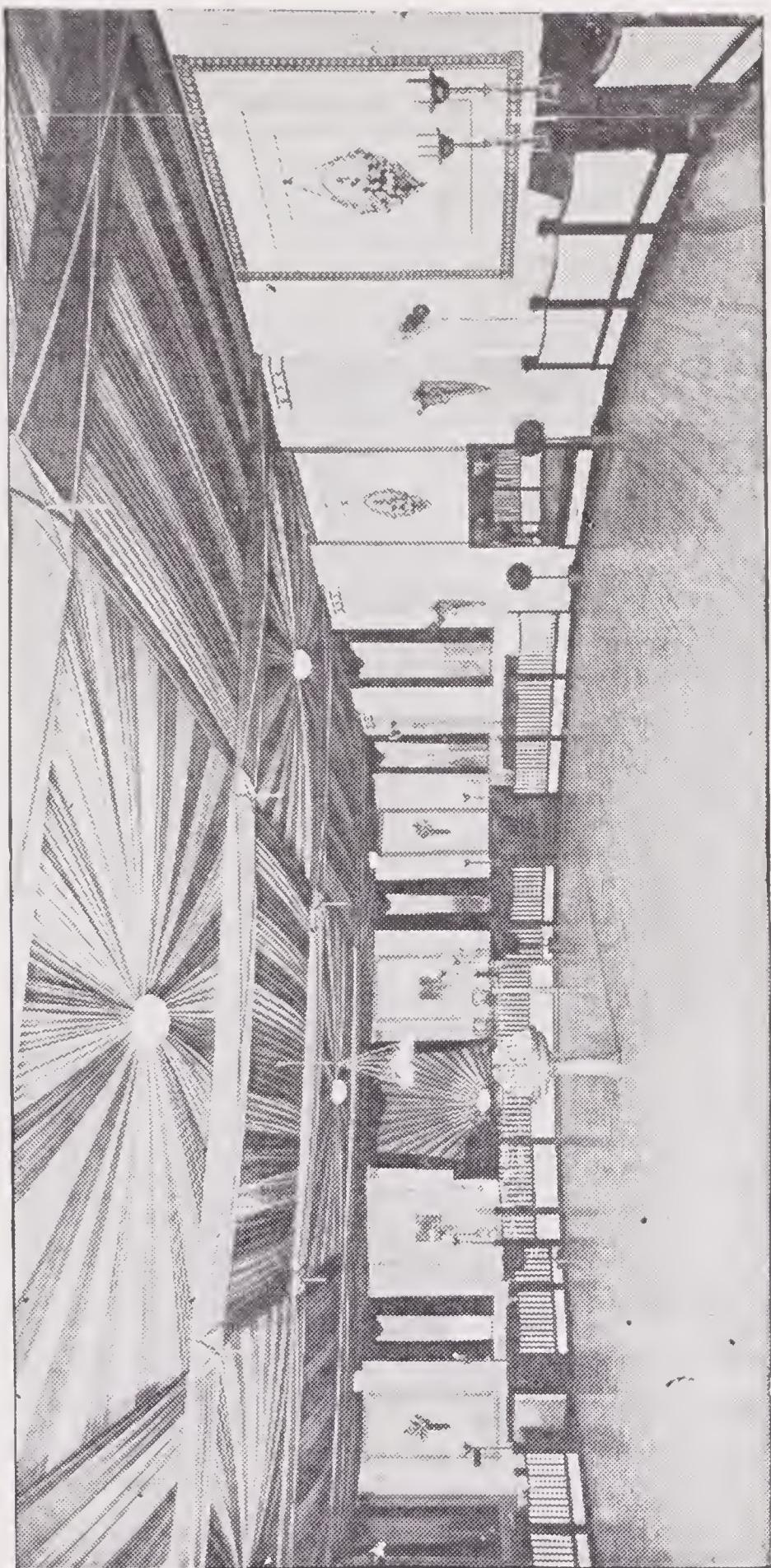
A common source of trouble in connection with the dance halls is the unpleasant squabbles which take place between parents and children over the question of late hours. These usually occur between mothers and daughters. The girl usually wins out, but frequently it is at the expense of an open rupture from which experience, according to the investigations of certain eminent criminologists,<sup>1</sup> her anti-social habits really date.

<sup>1</sup>See Cyril Burt, *The Young Delinquent*, p 148

From the standpoint of the sociologist, the dance hall, even in the light of its shortcomings, such as its tremendous contributions to personal demoralization, is justified in laying claim to its right to exist. Dancing is a social process which is intimately associated with love, and is a very definite process of courtship. It may be considered as a novitiate for love. It plays an important rôle in the process of sexual selection. It enables the male to impress the image of himself on the imagination of the female by means of his personality, fascination, and skill. Its additional functions are clearly set forth in the following excerpt:

It is, however, the dance itself, apart from work and apart from the other arts, which, in the opinion of many to-day, has had a decisive influence in socializing, that is to say in moralizing, the human species. Work showed the necessity of harmonious rhythmic coöperation, but the dance developed that rhythmic coöperation and imparted a beneficial impetus to all human activities. It was Grosse, in his *Beginnings of Art*, who first clearly set forth the high social significance of the dance in the creation of human civilization. The participants in a dance, as all observers of savages have noted, exhibit a wonderful unison; they are, as it were, fused into a single being stirred by a single impulse. Social unification is thus accomplished. Apart from war, this is the chief factor making for social solidarity in primitive life; it was indeed the best training for war, as for all the other coöperative arts of life. All our most advanced civilization, Grosse insisted, is based on dancing. It is the dance that socialized men.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Havelock Ellis, "The Philosophy of Dancing," *Atlantic Monthly*, cxiii, 206.



THE MURRAY PALACE CASINO



## DANCE HALLS INVESTIGATED

*Class A*

(a) *Lincoln Colonnade.* This dance hall is located on You Street in the basement of the Lincoln Theater. It has a capacity of one thousand, but the average attendance is usually about six hundred. It was formerly owned by Crandall's Theater Corporation, a white company. In 1927 the theater and building were sold to the Howard-Lincoln Theater Corporation. Under the proprietorship of both companies Negroes have always acted as managers. The price of admission varies from thirty-five cents to a dollar, according to whether the dance is a matinee or night affair and according to the persons giving the affair. It is patronized by all classes at their own respective dances. Most of the college fraternities give open and closed affairs here, as do also the various clubs and prominent social leaders.

(b) *The Murray Palace Casino.* It is owned and managed by the Murray Brothers, Negroes. It is located on You Street between Ninth and Tenth Streets. It has a capacity of eighteen hundred but a general attendance of about five hundred. The building was designed and constructed by the late Isaiah T. Hatton, a prominent Negro architect, who died at the early age of thirty-two. All the labor in the building including steel construction was that of Negroes. It was one of the first reinforced concrete buildings ever erected in Washington, D.C. In the fall of 1925, the interior was remodelled

and the only maple dance floor in the District of Columbia was installed in this building. Practically all the leading fraternal and social organizations hold their dances here. The price is fifty-five cents at night and thirty-five cents at the matinee affairs. Many closed and open affairs are given here by the important social clubs. Since its remodelling, it is frequently alluded to as the most beautiful dance salon in America, which is owned and operated by Negroes.

(c) *St. Mary's* and *Calvary* Churches, both Episcopal churches, have dance halls connected with the church buildings. The affairs given at these churches are strictly private and are usually sponsored by the churches themselves.

(d) *Scottish Rite Temple*. It is located at 1631 Eleventh Street, and is owned by Negroes. It has a capacity of two hundred and sixty-nine. The entertainments given here are private and exclusive. The price of admission is, therefore, not standard. The use of the hall is restricted to those connected with the lodge.

#### *Class B*

(a) *Convention Hall*. Located at Sixth and L Streets, Northwest. It has a capacity of four thousand and five hundred. It seldom has an attendance of less than three thousand. This hall is used on holidays for exceptionally large crowds, and the dances are open to the general public. Promoters of dances given here are lodges, clubs, and syndicate dance promoters. The general admission

price is one dollar and ten cents, and the dances usually last from 8:30 p.m. to 3:30 a.m.

The building has been condemned by the city building inspector.

(b) *Coliseum*. The Coliseum was formerly used for exceptionally large public dances, but has recently been converted into a bowling alley. It is located at Ninth Street and Pennsylvania Avenue.

(c) *Washington Delicatessen*. Its location is at 2304 Georgia Avenue, Northwest. There is a space on the second floor which is sometimes used for "club smokers" and dances. The hall accommodates from seventy-five to one hundred persons. Its reputation is good, but its location and means of entrance (that is, through the cafe proper) make it unpopular.

(d) *Odd Fellows' Hall*. This hall is located on M Street, between Sixteenth and Seventeenth Streets, Northwest, and is owned by the Odd Fellows, a Negro secret order. It accommodates about three hundred persons, but has a general attendance of about two hundred and fifty. The general price of admission is fifty-five cents at night and thirty-five cents for matinees. Although about one-third of the dances given here are patronized by the upper classes, the majority of them are open affairs patronized by the lower classes.

(e) *Jenifer's*. Jenifer's Hall, which is the auditorium of what used to be the Jenifer's Business School, is located at N Street and New Jersey Avenue, Northwest. It

has a capacity of about one hundred and is used by the best clubs and fraternities in the city.

### *Class C*

(a) *Press Club.* The Press Club which is located at 1502 Thirteenth Street, Northwest, was formerly a dance hall in which respectable dances were held, but now it has a shady reputation. It is located in a semi-white neighborhood, and from outside appearance it would impress one as being very orderly, but it is generally known that the behavior which takes place on the inside will not stand careful investigation. It has a capacity of about one hundred.

(b) *Thomas' Hall.* This dance hall is located on the third floor of the Clef Club Building at Ninth and R Streets, Northwest. It has a capacity of about one hundred. Many informal affairs of a respectable nature are held here. It is very poorly ventilated, the windows being very small, and it lacks adequate fire protection.

(c) *Pythian Temple.* It is located on You Street between Twelfth and Thirteenth Streets, with a capacity for five hundred and a general attendance of about three hundred. The price of admission is fifty-five cents at night and thirty-five cents for matinees. Most of the dances here are patronized by the lower classes. The building is owned by the colored Knights of Pythias.

(d) *Fishermen's Temple.* The Fishermen's Temple Hall, owned by Negroes, is located on F Street between

Three and Four and one-half Streets, Southwest. It has a capacity of three hundred and a general attendance of about two hundred and fifty. The price of admission is generally forty cents. It receives its patronage from the lower classes of Negro society.

(e) *Peacock Alley*. This is one of the questionable dance halls which operates intermittently. It remains for the most part under police surveillance.





THE ANNUAL DANCE OF THE KAPPA ALPHA PSI FRATERNITY



## CHAPTER XI

### THE CABARET AND ITS LIFE

#### ITS BEHAVIORISTIC ASPECTS

THE BEHAVIOR IN CABARETS has somewhat the same character as that of the dance hall, except that the latter is milder and takes the form of a sublimation. The cabaret seems to exist for the purpose of furnishing an avenue of expression for impulses which even the dance hall cannot free. Cabaret behavior is dance hall behavior intensified.

The cabarets are also rendezvous for those who live under social restrictions. They constitute "moral regions," i.e., places where original nature can be freed. Here, improper conduct becomes conventionalized and the more restrictive types of control are removed. The behavior which results is spontaneous, being an expression of the fundamental human impulses and emotions. Excess in dancing, jungle laughter, and semi-alcoholic beverages are characteristic features of their life. Here, jazz music is carried to extremes. In general, there is more abandon achieved by the dancers than in the formal dance hall, and more of a tendency toward nakedness on the part of the female entertainers.

Hence, the recreation in dance halls and cabarets dif-

fers characteristically from that in theaters and on play grounds.

#### CABARETS INVESTIGATED

The following cabarets were studied in this survey:

(a) *Oriental Gardens*. This is the oldest cabaret in the city for the entertainment of Negroes. It is located at Ninth and R Streets, Northwest, about four feet below the street level. It consists of one small basement room with a capacity for fifty-seven and a larger room up-stairs. The roof is very low, affording poor ventilation. The dancing space is very small. Entertainment is given by female singers and dancers. The patronage is migratory, with a nightly attendance of about two hundred, Negroes and white people. This third-class place is owned by the Clef Club. The cover charge per person is twenty-five cents.

(b) *Andrew Thomas' Cabaret*. Located at Seventh and R Streets, Northwest. The nightly attendance is two hundred and ten, although it has a capacity for only one hundred. The patronage consists of both Negroes and white persons, and is migratory. This is also a third-class place of amusement. The cover charge is twenty-five cents.

(c) *Phoenix Inn*. Between Twelfth and Thirteenth Streets on You Street, opposite the Lincoln Theater. The entertainment is of a high class, decidedly superior to that found at the other cabarets. There are tables for two inside booths having glass doors through which the

entertainment can be seen. It is operated by Chinese, who cater to white and Negro patrons.

(d) *Cafe Cat's Meow*. Located at Four and one-half and F Streets, Southwest. It was opened in May, 1925. The appearance of this small hall is very suggestive of low conduct. The lights are dim with an almost red aspect. There are suggestive pictures on the walls. There are six tables. The entertainment is of a low type with vulgar dancing and boisterousness. At the time of this study no raid had been made.

(e) *Cafe De Luxe*. This is the largest cabaret in the city catering to Negroes. It is located at Seventh and S Streets, Northwest. There are fifteen tables. The singing and dancing is accompanied by a jazz orchestra. The conduct is very orderly. The cover charge per person is twenty-five cents.

(f) *The Dreamland Cafe*. This cafe was formerly located on Seventh Street between S and T Streets. The entertainment was found to be unwholesome, and much drunkenness and disorderly conduct was prevalent. Above the cafe was a house of prostitution. In December, 1923, the place was raided, and, liquor being found, it was closed and the manager put in jail.

(g) *The Paradise Cafe*. Located in an up-stairs room of a building on Georgia Avenue, just off Florida Avenue. This cafe has been closed since February, 1924, at which time it was raided. The raid occurred at two o'clock, Sunday morning. The patrons were in a drunken condition, women as well as men. The trouble started

when two men began fighting over a woman. The police were summoned. The woman was found undressed and was arrested with the men. This site is now occupied by a white pool room.

(h) *The Hole in the Wall and the Tub O'Blood.* These two cabarets, the former located on Six and one-half Street, Southwest, and the latter on E Street, Southwest, were both raided in March, 1925. Liquor was found on the premises, the proprietors were arrested and the cabarets closed.

(i) *Night Club Bohemia.* It is located at the corner of Eleventh and You Streets in the basement of Davis' Drug Store. It was opened in the fall of 1926. For a short time it was attended by many of the leading citizens of Washington, and maintained a standing among the most prominent centers of amusement. The management insisted upon its patrons being attired in evening dress. This standard could not be maintained, however, and it has degenerated somewhat, because of the demoralizing influences of a class of unscrupulous patrons. This cabaret is very poorly ventilated and possesses all the defects of the underground night club.

(j) *The Silver Slipper Club.* This cabaret was opened in 1927 in the Pythian Temple Building near Twelfth and You Streets. It possesses no characteristics that might distinguish it from other cabarets. A number of probation officers have reported to the author that this cabaret is the "hangout" of a rather large number of their delinquent girls.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE ROLE OF THE POOL ROOM

#### FORMS OF SOCIAL INTERACTION

UNLIKE THE DANCE HALLS and cabarets, the behavior in pool rooms is not characterized by sex stimulation and catharsis. It is charged, rather, with magic, superstition, imitation, and competition. Second only to the barber shop as a center of discussion, the pool hall serves as a powerful agency for cultural integration and diffusion. To its patrons it is of more significance than the newspaper, since events and matters of interest are discussed here which never reach the press. Particularly are they centers of exciting news, such as of arrests, murders, riots, noteworthy successes, etc.

Here, also men gain their social standing through the force of their personalities, mental superiority, or skill.

They are also places at which various crises frequently occur; e.g., personal conflicts, quarrels, profane language, and sometimes shooting affairs. These all furnish new experience and satisfy to some extent the craving for novelty.

They play a most significant rôle as mobilization centers at times when racial conflict seems imminent. This was particularly true on two occasions within recent years. At the time of the Washington Race Riot in 1919

they served as headquarters for belligerents. Later, in 1923, when a prominent Negro citizen was facing the danger of being driven from his newly purchased home in a white section of the city, he found his greatest problem to be that of preventing the gangs which were mobilizing in the colored pool rooms from coming to his rescue, and possibly precipitating one of the worst riots in American history. Hence, the pool halls act as headquarters for incipient gangs.

Certain pool rooms have more status than others, depending largely on their location and equipment, but equally as much on the personalities of the two or three leading patrons.

Such places are the harbingers of superstition and magic, since luck and chance play an important rôle in the activity performed. But they are also places where much liberal thought is promoted through discussion, disagreement, and the giving of information. The majority of pool hall patrons are persons who have wide experience, even though they have little formal education. They are men who have travelled widely as porters, waiters, chauffeurs, etc. And one only needs to assume a sympathetic attitude to realize that here experience and ideas from the "ends of the earth" are assembled.

The contacts of these patrons are truly cultural, though hardly intellectual.

#### NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF BILLIARD PARLORS

The Silver Slipper Billiard Parlor is located at 1721 Seventh Street, Northwest. It has six tables which are

in poor condition. The pool room on a whole is ill-kept and the attendance is small. There is no cafeteria and no piano.

At 1513 Seventh Street, Northwest, there is another billiard parlor, which is kept very clean, but the tables and sticks are in poor condition. There is no cafeteria and no piano. This parlor has four tables.

The billiard parlor at 1502 Seventh Street, Northwest, has eight tables, which are in bad condition. The room is poorly ventilated and there are few attendants. There is a cigar counter and a lunch counter, but the food is exposed to contamination. A very low class of people frequent this pool hall.

The Tierney Billiard Parlor is located at 1317 Seventh Streets, Northwest. It has six tables, which are kept in good condition. The room is well-ventilated. There is a good attendance but of a low class. The manager estimated his daily income at \$30.00. There is a buffet lunch counter and a nickle slot-piano.

The billiard parlor located at 1225 Seventh Street, Northwest, has three badly worn tables. The room is not well kept, and the manager stated that he was busy only after five o'clock in the evening. The room is poorly ventilated. There is a buffet but no music.

The Ideal Billiard Parlor is located at 1235 Seventh Street, Northwest, and has two tables. The tables and sticks are in fairly good condition, but the room is poorly ventilated. The patronage is small. There is a tailor shop in the rear.

At 1224 Seventh Street there is a billiard parlor which

has six well-kept tables. The parlor is kept very clean and ventilation is good. There is no piano and no lunch counter. The average daily income is fifty dollars.

The Subway Billiard Parlor is located at 1817 Seventh Street, Northwest, and it has seven tables, which are kept in good condition. There is a lunch counter and a nickle slot-piano. The average daily income is seventy-five dollars.

The Southern Aid Building Billiard Parlor is located at Seventh and T Streets, Northwest. The room is kept in good condition and the three tables are in good condition.

The Combine Billiard Parlor is located at 1731 Fourteenth Street, Northwest. It has six tables. Ventilation is good, but the attendance is very small. There is a lunch room, which is kept very clean.

The Penny Savings Club Billiard Parlor is located at 1917 Fourteenth Street, Northwest. There are five poorly-kept tables. Ventilation is poor. There is a cold drink stand, and this parlor is the headquarters of race-horse booking.

The billiard parlor located at 2009 Georgia Avenue, Northwest, is owned by Theus Smith. There are six tables kept in good condition. The place is exceptionally clean and is well ventilated. This parlor is frequented mainly by students. There is a cold drink stand and shoe shine parlor in the front of the pool room. The average daily income is one hundred dollars.

The Poodle Dog Billiard Parlor is located at 2011 Georgia Avenue, Northwest. It is a very poorly-kept

place with little ventilation. There are nine tables, which are in bad condition. The attendance is very large at all times.

At 1844 P Street there is a small billiard parlor with four tables. The place is quite filthy. However, it is well ventilated. There is a shoe shine stand in the rear and a lunch counter in the front.

Hyders Billiard Parlor is located on the corner of Ninth Street and Florida Avenue. There are seven tables, which are always crowded. It has a splendid location but the building is quite shabby. The building is well ventilated.

The Billiard Parlor in the Ikley Apartments on You Street, between Thirteenth and Fourteenth Streets, has six tables. The ventilation is good and the place is kept very clean. The income is seven dollars daily.

The Idle Hour Billiard Parlor is located at 1110 You Street, Northwest. It has six tables and is patronized by the upper classes. It is kept clean and has good ventilation. There is neither a piano nor a cafeteria in the place.

The Idle Hour Annex is located at 1207 You Street. It has four tables, which are in good condition. Despite the very poor ventilation, the attendance is quite large.

The Narrow Gauge Billiard Parlor is located at 1217 You Street. It is kept in a fairly good condition and the attendance is large. There is a cafeteria in the front and income is eighty-five dollars.

The Southwest Billiard Parlor is located at Four and one-half and L Streets, Southwest. There are five poor-

ly-kept tables and a cafeteria, which is in the front of the parlor.

At 312 L Street, Southwest, there is a very small billiard parlor, having only two tables. Attendance is very poor. There is no music and no cafe.

The billiard parlor located at 420 M Street, Northwest, has three tables very poorly kept.

There are no bowling alleys in the city for Negroes except the one at the Coliseum, which caters to both races. No Negroes, however, ever patronize it.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE E. MADISON HALL EXCURSION BOAT

ONE OF THE MOST UNIQUE features included in the recreational advantages for Negroes in Washington is their access to an excursion boat. This boat goes under the name of E. Madison Hall; and is owned by one of the enterprising Negroes of this city, Mr. J. O. Holmes. He purchased it in 1917. During the first three years of his ownership, he allowed it to be used in connection with the Government Service, since it was at this period that all such forces were mobilized in the interest of alleviating the inimical problems which faced America as a whole. Upon the completion of this service, however, the boat was converted into an excursion steamer, for up to this time no such convenience had been made available to the Negroes of Washington. Hence, it was not long before Mr. Holmes realized that he was not only meeting an urgent demand of the Negro people, but that he was also satisfying a great need in supplying a wholesome catharsis to the many classes of people in Washington and outlying regions.

The facilities and equipment of the boat appear to be quite adequate. It is a steamer one hundred and sixty feet long with a capacity of four hundred gross tons. It has a seating capacity of eight hundred and is provided with twenty staterooms. The entire crew is composed of

Negroes and consists of one captain, one mate, one purser, one chambermaid, two engineers, two firemen, one coal passer, two cooks, two waiters, four policemen, and six deckhands.

The excursion season begins about the first Sunday in May and lasts through September. From two to three trips are made each day down the Potomac River to the summer resort, River View. The writer's interview with Mr. Holmes and his captain, Mr. Brown, revealed the fact that about every Negro organization of this city avails itself of the opportunity of a trip down the river sometime during the season. Special mention was made of the various church organizations of the city. Whenever music is desired it is provided by the organization which has chartered the boat for that trip; for there is sufficient space for dancing when it is desired.

As one gets an insight into the various recreational contrivances that have been provided to give adequate and wholesome expression to certain impulses and to tone up and recreate others that have been weakened through routine and monotony, one realizes that each recreational function cannot be fully supplied or substituted by any other means. So it is on an excursion boat on a moonlight evening when the behavior of the waves aids in conditioning the demeanor and conduct of the occupants of the boat. The joviality and inflated stimulation appear to penetrate every sensitive organism, so that one is bound to forget one's cares until the termination of the trip. And this one fact alone is conducive to the generation of energy and health.

It has been observed that these trips attract different classes of people, and, as might be expected, because of the different backgrounds into which the life of different classes is interwoven, and because of the fact that no one situation is likely to offer the same environment for any two groups of people, many different reactions are evinced from classes of dissimilar interests. Hence, when individuals who are advanced in age go down the river, the trip seems to fill them with awe and wonder at the dynamic expression of a supernatural Being controlling the forces of the river. And the feelings which grow out of this condition are manifested in words of hope, songs of expectancy, and prayers of reverence, all of which tend to lessen the problems of life.

With the younger set the expression is somewhat different, although the result might be similar. The music, the rhythm, the cadence, the dancing, the gaiety and high spirits that characterize this class of people show that there is a considerable expenditure of surplus energy. Hence, this avenue of recreation offers as wholesome an opportunity for expression of pent-up feelings as could be furnished under the circumstances.

Mr. Holmes, the only Negro owner of a steamboat in this city and one of the few in this country, has stated that there are times when he is unable to provide adequately for all the persons who desire excursion trips. It appears, therefore, that such a recreational feature as an excursion boat is indispensable in conditioning the wholesome expression of the impulses of the people of Washington.





N FOOTBALL GAME







## PART III

### SOME BEHAVIOR SEQUENCES OF INADEQUATE RECREATIONAL AND AMUSEMENT FACILITIES



## CHAPTER XIV

### NEGROES WHO PASS FOR WHITE

A SIGNIFICANT INDEX to the undeveloped character of the cultural life of the Washington Negro in the avenues of leisure-time activities is to be found in the tendency of scores of light-complexioned Negroes to pass as white in attendance at white theaters, receptions, and other forms of entertainment. No small percentage of mulattoes impose themselves in this surreptitious manner upon white social life.

#### CLASSES OF MULATTOES WHO PASS FOR WHITE

Such persons may be conveniently divided into two classes. First, there are those who magnify the white man's culture and rate it as superior to that of the Negro, and, hence, as more to be desired than that of the group with which they are formally identified. They are, for the most part, mulattoes who do not care to associate in any way with persons who are conspicuously Negroes. They are not only seeking higher forms of culture in the avenues of amusement and recreation, but are attempting to free themselves, as far as possible, from Negro association. They seize upon every available opportunity to identify themselves with the white race. They not only find their enjoyment and spend their leisure time in the white world, but endeavor to form their associations

among white people, in order that they may get into their more intimate and private social life. They may seek to enter their homes under the pretense of being white. The majority of this class of mulattoes are successful in achieving their aim. They are usually so fair of complexion that they are never detected. Possessing the white man's temperamental characteristics, as a result of a preponderance of white blood, they hold an admiration for all things white, and entertain a strong and overwhelming desire to become members of the white race. They can be found not only in the formal recreational and amusement life of white people, such as the theaters, public receptions, musicals, etc., but also in the more informal phases of their life, such as private receptions, home life, etc. These persons, of course, are entertained only because of the unawareness of their racial identity.<sup>1</sup>

This class of mulattoes, because of their overwhelming desire to escape from the Negro group, proclaim their identification with the white race. In fact, by virtue of the predominance of their white blood, white temperamental traits, and general interest in and appreciation of all phases of white culture, they are both biologically and psychologically white people, and belong properly to the group with which they are seeking to identify themselves. Such persons upon becoming white have seldom been known to rise high in their new world which they have adopted by stealth. This is, doubtless,

<sup>1</sup>See E. B. Reuter, *The Mulatto in the United States*, Chapter XII.

due to their fear that their racial identity might be disclosed if they should acquire conspicuous social positions. But they seem to prefer an inconspicuous place in the white world to a position of considerable prominence in the society of Negroes.

Fortunately for the Negro, this group constitutes a very small percentage of the rather large mulatto class in Washington. Most light-complexioned Negroes in this city belong to the second class. This class consists of two divisions: first, those who can pass for white and do so consciously, and, second, those who make no conscious efforts to pass for white but do so unconsciously. The members of the first division are not endeavoring to become white. They acclaim their identification with Negroes, have Negro associates, and frequently play prominent rôles in Negro civic and community life. They "pass" for the advantage which it gives them in coming into contact with more advanced forms of culture. They are conscious of the absence from Negro culture, because of certain economic handicaps, of many important elements indicative of higher and more complex forms of socialization. In an environment where race exclusion is practiced, they feel that they must employ the only available means of gaining contact with the most advanced phases of modern social life. Hence, they consciously resort to this form of deception in gaining entrance to the door which is hermetically sealed against Negroes. Therefore, scores of them "pass," occupy the best seats in the midst of or adjacent to white people,

engage them in conversation, and listen to them vituperously blaspheme "niggers."

#### RATIONALIZATIONS

Such mulattoes justify this mode of deception on the ground that they are not trying to intermarry and intrude upon the white man's more intimate and personal life, but have merely discovered a mechanism for getting around the white man's policy of "total exclusion." Another justification is made on the ground that this policy of exclusion, based on sheer prejudice, is unjust and immoral; hence, no evil is really being done by "passing." There is also the assumption that, since the white man is responsible for the mulatto, he should experience him as a burden.

#### UNCONSCIOUS EFFECTS

The second division is composed of light-complexioned Negroes who do not consciously pass for white, but who, because of their color, are frequently treated as white by white officials of public places of amusement. A number of mulattoes have reported to the author the experience of having seats, which had been set aside exclusively for white people, sold to them, when persons whose racial identity was more clearly defined, found it impossible to purchase such seats. These persons do not consciously use their color for gaining advantages, but are "passed," rather, by unsuspecting white people. The

following incident illustrates the typical experience of such light-complexioned Negroes:

During the summer of 1925, the Bonus Bureau employed a few more white persons to fill some of the vacancies. Mrs. E—, a mulatto, who could easily feign white, applied for employment and was "taken on" with the others. She, as confessed, was more concerned with getting employment than about her racial identity. She was placed, however, in a segregated "wing" in which "only whites" are supposed to work. She went about her duties, but perhaps unfortunate for her, she was surrounded by garrulous old maids from "Dixie," whose constant conversation was frequently punctuated with "nigger." As reported, after the conventional "good mawnin," the next thing to follow invariably each and every morning was "nigger this" or "nigger that."

After tolerating this situation for nearly one week, Mrs. E— was forced to respond when one of the women was recounting an experience, as alleged, with a Negro girl while on her way to work. After saying some of the most vile things conceivable about the girl, she concluded with the statement, "That is true of and applies to all niggers. They ought to be wiped off the earth." Mrs. E— became enraged and took issue with the woman. As alleged, she told this woman that her statements were false, unfounded, and a "predicated lie," that she, herself, was a Negro and knew the accusation to be merely a fit of prejudice based on her jealousy of the girl on whom she was lying.

Mrs. E— then hastened to find her superior and requested that she be removed to the "wing" downstairs in which Negroes only were at work. This was immediately done and the Negroes in the lower "wing" rejoiced at her coming and hailed her as a heroine and champion of "her people."<sup>1</sup>

The following is another concrete illustration of the

<sup>1</sup>William H. Jones and Damon P. Young, *Negro-White Contacts in Washington, D.C.* (unpublished manuscript.)

manner in which the mulatto gets imperceptibly into the white world:

During the spring, 1925, and previous thereto, Mrs. G—, a mulatto, was employed in a "white wing" of the Bonus Bureau. She was taken to be white and, of course, did not object. Nevertheless some inquisitive person in the Bureau investigated secretly and discovered that she was colored. About this time the date for the annual spring ball given by and for white employees of the Bureau at the Willard Hotel was very near. Young women of the Bureau were selling the tickets and almost every employee in the particular "wing" had purchased one or more. One day one of the young women of the "wing" approached Mrs. G— and asked her when she was going to get her tickets for the ball. "Oh," she's colored!" interrupted one of the other white women. Mrs. G— confessed, and like forest-fire, the news spread throughout the Bureau that Mrs. G— was caught "passing."

She was retained in the particular "wing," but there she was forever stigmatized and ostracized. When the news reached the "colored wing" there was a general rejoicing, and Mrs. G— became ever thereafter indeed the woman without a race. She was accepted in neither racial group and was forced to have lunch alone and to come to and go from work alone. She was a social outcast.<sup>1</sup>

#### AN INDEX TO CULTURAL ASSIMILATION

These three groups—those who want to be white in every sense and escape entirely from Negro life; those who do not wish to escape from Negro life, except occasionally in order to experience some of the elements of a more advanced cultural process; those who make no

<sup>1</sup>William H. Jones and Damon P. Young, *Negro-White Contacts in Washington, D.C.* (unpublished manuscript.)

effort to escape into the white man's world, but who find themselves there by virtue of the lack of well-defined lines of demarcation—represent the degree to which the Washington Negro is able to break down the barriers of isolation between the two races in relation to the leisure-time activities.

A prominent Negro citizen of Washington is reported to have remarked to the owner of a famous chain of theaters in this city, all of which are closed to Negroes, that a large number of colored persons attend his theaters. He replied that he was quite aware of it, and had no objection so long as his patrons were ignorant of their racial identity.

These stealthy activities of the mulatto are an index to the extent to which Negroes are penetrating the white man's life. A careful analysis of the cultural and social life of the Negro group indicates clearly that it is a necessity. Its own cultural life and forms of social interaction lack many elements that the social life of the white group possesses, because of its greater civilized heritage, complex social organization, economic development, and subordination to scientific technique. The recreational and amusement facilities of the Negro group in Washington are far inadequate to satisfy the interests and wishes of the Negro intelligentsia. This more highly-cultured group suffers greatly from this absence of avenues by which higher intellectual and emotional interests can find expression. The economic insufficiency and lack of social experience render the Negro group incapable of successfully promoting amusement activi-

ties that will transcend the level of "jazz." Hence, we have this encroachment upon white social life when there is a strong desire to enjoy the best dramatic and musical performances.

#### SOCIAL AND INDIVIDUAL BENEFITS DERIVED

The "passing" of the Negro has both its advantageous and disadvantageous effects upon the Negro group as well as upon the individual. It is beneficial in that it breaks down the barriers of isolation between the two races, destroys cultural exclusion, and forms a channel by which the Negro can participate in the general cultural life of the city. It is obvious that for a number of generations in the future the Negro group must build up its culture by assimilation from the white group. It has often been argued by Negroes, as well as by white persons, that passing for white in the fields of recreation and amusement is not warranted. It is assumed that the Negro could confine his "passing" activity to those areas of life from which he can assimilate material culture, technique, and technological facts, such as in the fields of business, education, the professions and the trades. Sociologically speaking, it is really in those avenues of life in which people are engaged in leisure-time activity that the greatest cultural assimilation takes place. Here, the cultural elements that are presented are more easily apprehended because they are primarily overt objective forms of behavior. They are presented directly to the senses rather than to the inner conceptual or ideational life. The love and melodrama, sex display, etc., of the theater are

more appealing than the concepts, formulas, and technologies of the business, trade, and intellectual worlds.<sup>1</sup> Hence, such cultural forms are more easily assimilated. It is also true, however, that they have less creative value for the Negro. Doubtless, much more is achieved from mulattoes who pass as white in the fields of material and cultural technique than in the fields of leisure-time expressions, although the significance of the latter should in no wise be minimized. It is largely from the Negro who passes for white, but who does not forsake his own group that the racial group gets its copies and models of higher forms of leisure-time activity. But, it is obvious that a much smaller percentage of anti-social elements are introduced into Negro life by mulattoes who penetrate those fields of culture which deal with the technologies than from the realm of amusement. The former has more creative value than the latter. On the other hand, the Negro theatrical world has been improved by mulattoes who were once on the inside of the white theatrical world and carried back into Negro life new and modified types of vaudeville and other forms of dramatic expression.

The social benefits that come to the individual who "passes" are principally of the nature of the psychic and symbolic. He encounters a world which contains new stimuli in the form of attitudes, habits, and personalities, which he may be coerced into imitating. He comes into contact with the best forms of public amusement

<sup>1</sup>Cf. L. L. Bernard *Introduction to Social Psychology*, pp. 168-70.

that the city has to offer, all of which fire his imagination and make him conscious of the shortcomings of the cultural life of his own racial group, which may in turn throw him back upon his own group to do creative work in the interest of improving its culture.

#### HARMFUL INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL EFFECTS OF SUCH BEHAVIOR

Numerous disadvantages and evil consequences are connected with Negroes passing for white. These result both to the individual and to the group. In many instances it has broken down race loyalty and race consciousness. The Negro's race consciousness must be thought of as a product of social pressure, chiefly, race prejudice. It is experienced primarily by those who are affected by the prejudice of the white race and the exclusion from his life. Those who by virtue of their color escape much of this social pressure unquestionably experience less race consciousness and race loyalty than those who bear the more conspicuous racial mark. That "consciousness-of-kind," resulting from a common experience is not so prevalent a factor in the life of the mulatto as it is in that of the darker Negro. Although no studies have been made as yet to determine the relative strength of race loyalty, race consciousness, and race pride among Negroes who pass as white, or who are frequently mistaken for white, and those who wear the badge of color, yet numerous observations and consultations seem to indicate a much greater strength of these elements among persons who are conspicuously

Negroes. However, several exceptions to this tendency were discovered. It appears, therefore, from the author's own observations, as well as from logical deductions, that Negroes who, because of their color, are able to break through the barriers of isolation and exclusion, suffer less from the malady of race consciousness, and possess weaker attitudes of race loyalty than those of darker complexion. Whether color has any biological significance has not been fully ascertained, but as to its sociological significance there is now no question.<sup>1</sup>

From the standpoint of personal demoralization "passing" in the fields of amusement has its evil effects. The "passer" is escaping from his own world and, hence, from the control mechanisms to which his life has been adjusted; e.g., from its attitudes, its face-to-face acquaintanceship relations, from its public opinion, mores, and ideals. Free from these, and in the social world where he is anonymous with no identification with the new group, he becomes peculiarly exposed to the temptations of this new social world, and peculiarly inclined to yield to them on account of this freedom from constraint which the control processes of his own world impose. From an analysis of the life histories of twenty-five mulattoes who frequently penetrated the white world incognito, it was discovered that "passing" is likely to be used ultimately for anti-social purposes. For this reason, it is very closely associated with personal demoralization. Hence, the unique function which the

<sup>1</sup>Cf. E. B. Reuter, *The Mulatto in the United States*, p. 375.

mulatto performs as a sort of cultural intermediary between the two races is counterbalanced somewhat by the damage done to his race loyalty and pride, and to his character, by his surreptitious crossing into the white world. From a number of observations and consultations it was discovered that colored people who cannot pass for white resent this action on the part of those who can. Frequently, through gossip and other forms of condemnation, such mulattoes are ostracized or have a severe stigma placed upon them. A number of mulattoes informed the author that they never let their darker-complexioned friends know about their frequent visits to the white amusement world because, "they always act so funny about it." One young woman who was a leader of the moral and intellectual life of the young women of the institution with which she was connected, expressed grave fears of being apprehended; for she said she knew that her influence as a leader would unquestionably be destroyed.

It is to be emphasized that in Washington, passing for white in the recreational and amusement worlds is primarily the product of inadequate facilities and avenues to accommodate the higher leisure-time interests of the upper-classes of Negroes. One or two efforts are now being made to alleviate this situation. The most important is probably the "Little Theater" movement, which bears the name Krigwa, and which is attempting to present Negro plays portraying a higher type of Negro life than is depicted in the average vaudeville or burlesque show. Local talent is used and the life which

is presented is characterized by considerable realism. The greatest difficulty which such a movement faces is that of meeting the competition of "jazz" entertainment in a "jazz" age.



## CHAPTER XV

### PATHOLOGICAL FORMS OF RECREATION

UNDER THIS CAPTION is included a discussion of the play and amusement activities that do not receive the approval of either formal laws or public opinion, because they make for the demoralization of the community. Chief among these forms are the three vices: prostitution, gambling, and alcoholic orgies. These represent the illegitimate and unwholesome side of the play-life of any community, but constitute in no small degree important means of socialization.

### THE MORAL REGION AND THE DISORGANIZED COMMUNITY

Washington does not seem to possess any definite vice areas, but it does have what the sociologists call "moral regions," i.e., districts where the mores and public opinion are weak and, hence, ineffective as agencies of control over the lives of individuals. In such areas it is easy for demoralization to take place and pathological behavior to creep in. Gambling and other forms of vice appropriate such sections of the city as favorable and more or less secure habitats. The weakness of public opinion in these areas seems to be due to the transient and unstable character of the population. This mobility results in a lack of permanency or fixity of life. A mass of transient individuals destroys the solidarity of a community or neighborhood, disrupts the settled habits, and

even frustrates the spirit of many of our urban districts. Sociologists have realized for some time that so far as control is concerned it is better for any community or neighborhood to be made up of a stable population. Where the population is transient, it is virtually impossible to develop anything like public opinion and normative social attitudes. Hence, in such areas of the city where the natural agencies of control, viz., public opinion and the mores, are ineffective, vice increases with a degree of rapidity. This absence of natural social restraints and the ineffective operation of the law, together with such factors as imitation and suggestion, give us our pathological forms of recreation. Additional light is thrown on this point by the following statement:

The first effect of this multiplication of contacts is to disorganize the individual by breaking down his personal relations upon which morality is based. Relations become casual and specialized. Association is upon a basis of specialized interests where but one phase of one's personality is known. The individual to a large degree determines his own behavior norms. The externality of his contacts make it possible for him to pass from one group to another even though the norms of the several groups are in conflict. All this is made possible by the increase in secondary contacts and a growing tendency to substitute them for primary contacts.<sup>1</sup>

The history of vice in practically every American city is intimately connected with the Negro population. With few exceptions, white vice areas have been created in or near settlements of Negroes, and furnish the patterns of behavior for such Negro communities. This tendency

<sup>1</sup>Ernest R. Mowrer, *Family Disorganization*, p. 166.

of the white population to secret its vice in Negro communities has been due to the lack of resistance which the residents of such communities have offered to its encroachment. The weak resistance can be contributed to weak community organization. The principal index to ineffective community organization is weak public opinion. Most Negro communities in Washington are not characterized by solidarity. They lack homogeneity of cultural types. Variety, rather than uniformity prevails, and this interferes with the development of the like-mindedness from which a strong set of public sentiments and attitudes could arise. The best Negro communities may represent uniformity in economic status but are characterized by pronounced cultural variations.

Hence, vice and "sporting life" constitute a part of the traditions and heritages of many Negro neighborhoods. The patterns of conduct which these heritages offer the individual from generation to generation are the most potent conditioning factors in individual and group activity. The recreation of alley inhabitants takes almost exclusively the pathological forms. There are in the cultural environments of the alley dweller more degenerate and unwholesome than wholesome and normal patterns into which he, through suggestion and imitation, unconsciously weaves his behavior.

#### PROSTITUTION

Vice has long been a subject of sociological study. Since it bears a relation to crime, the two are usually considered together. But *vice* is a more comprehensive term

than *crime*. One sense in which the two may be differentiated is by regarding the former as acts which violate the mores and unwritten standards of the group, and the latter as those acts which are in contravention to laws. There has been a prevalent tendency to confine the term vice to sexual immorality, especially to prostitution and pandering. However, alcoholism and gambling are so closely related to illicit sexual behavior that they must be regarded as distinct phases of vice. Sociologists are now rapidly abandoning the theory that prostitution is fundamentally an economic institution. It has, to be sure, its economic phases of causation, but it is fundamentally a social institution, evolved on the basis of certain human-nature traits and tendencies. It bears a close relation to unfulfilled wishes, and is likely to grow out of the nature of the sex life. Prostitution has grown up as a part of the heritage of practically every society which is governed by traditional and fixed standards of conduct to give an avenue of expression to the play-functions of sex which these standards of society have failed to provide for adequately. Prostitution is, then, a recreational institution, a form of recreation which lends itself most easily to commercialization. And our surface observations have led us to believe that its chief causation is economic. In fact it has a threefold causation: personal, social, and economic forces.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See Walter T. Sumner, "Child Protection and the Social Evil," *Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the Forty-ninth Annual Meeting of the National Educational Association*, 1192 (1911.)

In considering the personal causes, attention is given first to the natural tendencies toward promiscuity. Prostitution is promiscuous sexual activities commercialized. Hence, the causes for promiscuity constitute the fundamental motives back of prostitution. The latter is a system which developed to accommodate the former. The promiscuous urge is a recreational or play urge. One potent factor in promiscuity is hypersexuality which characterizes a fairly large percentage of both sexes. This results in a natural tendency to express the sexual impulses beyond monogamous bonds. Hypersexuality seems to be largely hereditary.<sup>1</sup>

Another factor is the *desire for new experience*, i.e., novelty and variety. This is one of the greatest socializing wishes that characterizes individual and group activity. Then, there is the *desire for response*, i.e., love<sup>2</sup>. This desire is a cause for many women entering the life of prostitution. There is also the social effects of sexual incompatibility of husband and wife.

The social causes of prostitution are several. First is the increase of the population with a disproportion of the sexes in the cities.<sup>3</sup> Women may go into prostitution as a means of finding sexual companionship. Likewise, an excess of males may favor the development of such a

<sup>1</sup>Cf. William Healy, *The Individual Delinquent*, p. 250.

<sup>2</sup>See Park and Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, p. 489.

<sup>3</sup>See H. B. Hawthorn, *The Sociology of Rural Life*, p. 145; also the *Fourteenth United States Census*, 1920, Vol. III, pp. 42-43.

system. Too great a disproportion of women may result in *cheap women*. The shortage of females leads certain women to seize upon this opportunity to furnish sexual companionship for commercial considerations. A second social cause is the increase in the complexity of life and the competitive processes. Intense competition leads to the process of elimination of the incompetent and the inexperienced. The lazy, indolent, or feeble-minded woman is forced out of remunerative occupations, and is likely to fill the ranks of those who make a living in questionable ways. A third social factor is what has been called by Gallichan, "The Great Unmarried." Urban life often renders marriage difficult. This fosters promiscuity both in its commercialized and uncommercialized aspects.<sup>1</sup>

The economic side of this institution involves white slavery, pandering, and an highly-developed form of organization. After prostitution has become a stabilized social system, many are drawn into it for economic reasons. But the women who are in it for purely economic purposes tend to leave the life as soon as proper economic adjustments have been made elsewhere. Those who are in it for other reasons tend to remain.<sup>2</sup>

The occupational sources of prostitutes are suggestive of the relation of types of employment to many of our major social problems. Family servants, waitresses in restaurants, ushers in public places, maids, nurses, etc.,

<sup>1</sup>See Walter M. Gallichan, *The Great Unmarried*.

<sup>2</sup>See Howard B. Woolston, *Prostitution in the United States*, Vol. I, pp. 62-63.

are a few occupational types that recruit the ranks of prostitutes. These all represent occupations in which the female employee is thrown into continuous contact with the opposite sex. Hence, they are likely to be sought after for immoral purposes. And many seize upon this opportunity to reap economic advantages from such attachments. In addition to what has been pointed out about the continuous contact with the opposite sex, these occupations are also ones to which little or no status is attached. Society does not expect much from the house-servant, or the waitress, and so she usually does not try to be any more than society expects her to be.<sup>1</sup> It is usually assumed that the waitress or maid will make engagements with men for financial considerations. The dullness of these occupations is likely to give to their entrepreneurs a craving for intense forms of stimulation.

Low wages and the general low economic status of many colored girls and women, their employment in irresponsible occupations, plus the existence of anti-social patterns in the life of the community predispose them to pathological forms of recreation.

The majority of Negro houses of prostitution in Washington, as is true of other cities, are located in the trade zones of the areas inhabited by Negroes. These zones have certain distinct characteristics which greatly favor the growth of vice. Florida Avenue, Seventh Street, Ninth Street, and You Street in the Northwest

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Amy E. Tanner, "Glimpses at the Mind of the Waitress," *American Journal of Sociology*, XIII, 52. Also, Frances Donovan, *The Woman Who Waits*, pp. 211-20.

Section of the city are the geographical arteries along which Negro vice tends to expand. Upon analysis, these streets turn out to be rooming-house areas, areas of mobility and transition, and, hence, areas of anonymity. These are also areas in which the male population greatly exceeds the female population. On these streets may be found a large number of pool rooms, barber shops, gambling resorts, "boot-legging joints," and other institutions which exploit the human desires for pleasure and participation. The man of the middle class, who wants a taste of life, seeks centers which best serve his appetites and interests. These streets are the natural areas of the Bohemian class of the Negro population. Hence, the houses of prostitution have had their location determined by the interests of those Negroes who are more or less emancipated from social convention.

Within the past year vice dens have operated without interruption on Seventh Street and You Street, even to the extent of carrying on open street solicitation. In addition to these houses of prostitution that operate on Seventh Street, You Street, Florida Avenue, Georgia Avenue, and a number of other trade streets in the Negro area, there are a number of houses of prostitution which have been established in respectable neighborhoods. On Westminster Street, a short street of one block in length, at least two brothels were known to have operated during the major portion of the past year. This tendency for houses of prostitution to seek these more desirable streets, because of the protection which

such streets give them, has elicited considerable comment on the part of several leading Negro citizens.

These houses of prostitution tend to operate in a "chain," so that a woman who enters any one of these houses enters the entire system, and hence is likely to be transferred frequently to different houses. The "system" is very highly-organized. This is probably the result of its conflict with the outside world. There are the usual "spotters" and "cadets" who give warning of impending dangers, not to mention the panderers and solicitors who act as "field agents," and who, therefore, condition the degree of success of the business. It is futile to attempt to give any permanent locations to these houses, because of their transitory character. However, it can be safely said that they follow the areas of excess male population. The following statement of an old colored man is significant: "That must be a 'fast-house' over there on the corner. Well, that's what gets the boys' money."

In addition to these organized houses of prostitution, many rooming houses and immoral flats, especially in those areas where there are large numbers of unmarried, homeless men, function as temporary centers of clandestine sexual behavior. From these rooms girls have been seen to emerge and venture out onto the streets or to places of public entertainment to "catch tricks."

Sufficient evidence has been presented to show that sexual promiscuity is primarily a form of play or recreational activity.

## GAMBLING

In Washington, as in other cities where there is a large Negro population, gambling is a prevalent type of leisure-time activity. However, there seems to be a very small amount of professional gambling; few Negroes make this their vocation. It seems to be chiefly an avocation, and, as such, a form of recreation. There is the excitement of the game, which affords a change from the monotony of every-day life. To the poor, it gives not only a new experience but the additional excitement of a chance, however slight it may be, of improving their economic condition materially. Powerful emotions are aroused by the mere thought of winning. In gambling there is the predominance of the emotions over reason. Gambling is wholly irrational and the impulse to gamble is almost invariably increased as it is encouraged. This is due to the fact that the emotions are greatly enhanced as they are indulged. As a result, the gambler speedily becomes more rapacious, and more desirous of the excitement of gambling. And the habit becomes more or less firmly fixed in the individual, even verging at times onto a positive mania. Gambling stimulates rivalry and conflict, and often leads to crimes against the person, e.g., homicide and assault.

*Definition and Classification*

J. A. Hobson defines gambling as "the determination of the ownership of property by appeal to chance."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See "The Ethics of Gambling," in *Betting and Gambling*, edited by B. S. Roundtree, p. 1.

There are two possible classifications of the forms of gambling: first, that which goes on in leisure-time recreational activities; and second, that which goes on in business affairs. The former is carried on in connection with cards and some of the other indoor games, such as raffles, etc. It also occurs in connection with races and other outdoor games, elections, and public events. Business gambling takes the form of speculation. It is not characterized by such a predominance of the play impulse. That is, it is not primarily a form of recreation. In New York City, especially in Harlem, there exists the general and traditional practice of "playing the numbers." Washington has no such system of speculation for Negroes.

Most Negro gambling is recreational, taking the form of poker, dice, and betting on games. "Shooting craps" is often regarded by casual observers as the most distinctive form which this vice takes among Negroes. There appears to be considerable "crap shooting" among the less cultured classes. There seems to be a close correlation between gambling with dice and tipping. The hotel waiter, bellman, etc., generally speaking, are notorious for gambling with dice. This seems to be due to the fact that they have a large number of extra nickles and dimes most of the time, which, having been made easily, are disposed of in an irresponsible manner. "Crap shooting" among Negroes is a cultural pattern which represents a phase of their social heritage, which has been developed over a long period of time and passed down as a sort of folkway. Being so deep-rooted in the

Negro's social environment, it can only be eradicated through gradual evolution into higher and more complex forms of recreation. It is interesting to note that the upper-classes place a taboo on "dice." Gambling among them takes the form of poker, bridge, etc. "Crap shooting" is, then, a more naïve and primitive form of gambling and tends to disappear as we go higher up in the scale of cultural evolution. Gambling, like sexual promiscuity, is one of the most natural and basic forms of recreation, since genuine recreation as defined by the more or less instinctive tendencies is the sum total of those activities which give expression to the deep-seated emotions. Behavior that thrills, excites, and stimulates the imagination is recreative. G. T. W. Patrick says that man is not originally a working animal. "Civilization imposed work upon him, and if you work him too hard he will quit work and go to war [play.]"<sup>1</sup>

#### ALCOHOLIC ORGIES

This form of behavior represents a further effort to secure intense stimulation and to experience the supernormal. Such activities represent just another attempt to rise above the dullness of life as it is experienced in the conventional aspects. The great demand for alcoholic beverages has made bootlegging a very attractive and lucrative profession. The frequent remarks of alcoholics that there was something about the atmosphere of the saloon that could not be found anywhere else should

<sup>1</sup>"The Psychology of War," *Popular Science Monthly*, LXXXVII, 167, (1915).

arouse the interests of sociologists. Investigation and consultations disclose this "something" to be really little other than a congenial atmosphere where everybody feels at one with the patrons who visit it. There is a common moral unity that pervades such an atmosphere, and it is a place where the individual feels that he can go and get a friendly hand-shake, participate freely in the conviviality, and feel that "a man's a man." The facts, however, seem to indicate that nearly all anti-social environments are of a similar nature to that of the saloon. Arrayed as they are against the outside world, they can foster no other than an atmosphere pervaded with a deep sense of unity.

#### PATHOLOGICAL RECREATION AS A NATURAL PHENOMENON

The naturalness of these pathological phases of recreation becomes obvious when a careful analysis of human nature is made. Conventional, regulated, sublimated play leaves an element of the emotional life untouched. This explains the remark made by an adolescent girl at an important formal dance at one of the leading dance halls in this city: "Pshaw, this is too tame for me; let's go somewhere where we can have some fun." "Fun," seems to have implied sex. This attitude is characteristic of a large number of the youth of the present generation. For many the playground activities are quite inadequate to meet their deeper cravings. The modern dances with their high degree of sexual suggestibility

are partial accommodations to these desires of youth. Dances, from the standpoint of many of the younger generation, are tame unless they furnish an opportunity for bizarre and semi-sensuous behavior. Youth is seeking those forms of recreation that dissipate the romantic impulses. It interprets enjoyment in terms of adventure. Hence, most of its leisure-time is used up in a restless search for excitement. This romantic impulse probably gains its most outrageous expression in the unceremonious dancing done in cabarets. The chief struggle of society is to check pleasure and prevent it from taking the form of anti-social sex expression. The pathological forms of recreation have grown up to give expression to impulses which the more formal and socially-approved leisure-time activities fail to satisfy. The following excerpt offers to some extent an explanation of these pathological leisure-time activities:

Our present society tends more and more in its outward form in time of peace toward the Chautauqua plan, but meanwhile striving and passion burn in the brain of human units, till the time comes when they find this insipid life unendurable. They resort to amusement crazes, to narcotic drugs, to political strife, to epidemics of crime, and finally to war. The alcohol question well illustrates the tendencies we are pointing out. Science and hygiene have at last shown beyond all question that alcohol whether in large or smaller doses, exerts a damaging effect upon both mind and body. It lessens physical and mental efficiency, shortens life and encourages social disorder. In spite of this fact, and what is still more amazing, in spite of the colossal effort now being put forth to suppress by legislative means the traffic in liquor, the per capita consumption of alcoholic drinks in the United States increases from year to year. From a per

capita consumption of four gallons in 1850, it has steadily risen to nearly twenty-five gallons in 1913.

Narcotic drugs such as alcohol and tobacco, relieve in an artificial way the tension upon the brain by slightly paralyzing temporarily the higher and more recently developed brain centers. The increase in the use of these drugs is, therefore, an index of the tension of modern life and at the same time a means of relieving it to some extent. Were the use of these drugs suddenly checked, no student of psychology or of history could doubt that there would be an immediate increase of social irritability, tending to social instability and social upheavals.

Psychology, therefore, forces upon us this conclusion. Neither war nor alcohol can be banished from the world by summary means nor direct suppressions. The mind of man must be made over. As the mind of man is constituted, he will never be content to be a mere laborer, a producer and a consumer. He loves adventure, self-sacrifice, heroism, relaxation.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Robert E. Park throws additional light upon this subject when he says:

This restlessness and thirst for adventure is, for the most part, barren and illusory, because it is uncreative. We are seeking to escape from a dull world instead of turning back upon it to transform it.

Art, religion, and politics are still the means through which we participate in the common life, but they have ceased to be our chief concern. As leisure-time activities they must now compete for attention with livelier forms of recreation. It is in the improvident use of our leisure, I suspect, that the greatest wastes in American life occur.<sup>2</sup>

The above excerpts stress the naturalness of man's

<sup>1</sup>G. T. W. Patrick, "The Psychology of War," *Popular Science Monthly*, LXXXVII, 167-68, (1915).

<sup>2</sup>Park and Burgess, *The City*, p. 118.

desire for stimulation and relaxation. Human beings want to experience the arousal of dormant impulses. Conventionalized and socially-approved recreational activities usually serve to awaken only certain selected impulses, leaving those that are likely to take an anti-social form of expression unaroused. And the cabaret, the "moral region," and to a certain extent the dance hall direct their stimulation at these more basic original-nature impulses. Pathological forms of recreation will continue to exist until society discovers some means by which such potentially anti-social impulses can be aroused to express themselves in social ways. Psychologists and scientific students of society have been attempting to build up some mechanisms whereby this can be achieved. The process of *substitution*, viz., the transference of a stimulus or response from one set of impulses to another, thus drawing the attention away from that which would be likely to result disastrously to the individual or the group, is found to be more or less ineffective as a method of affording an ultimate solution of many social problems. This is a form of *sublimation*,<sup>1</sup> but real *sublimation* consists not in calling one's attention away from the impulses, but in encouraging their expression in such a way as to be socially desirable instead of socially undesirable. Sublimation allows all impulses to express themselves but endeavors to give a proper definition and direction to these impulses. If sublimation can be applied to every impulse that might

<sup>1</sup>R. S. Woodworth, *Psychology*, p. 535.

arise in human nature, it will furnish the individual and society with an adequate mechanism of social control. The task of every community, therefore, becomes that of directing the socially undesirable impulses into the socially desirable channels.

#### THE AUTOMOBILE AS AN AGENCY IN RECREATION

The sociological significance of the automobile is discussed in this study in the category of pathological forms of recreation, primarily because of its incredible contribution to sexual immorality.

W. I. Thomas, makes the following observation: "The automobile is connected with more seductions than happen otherwise in cities altogether."<sup>1</sup>

With due respect to its numerous beneficial aspects, such as rapid transportation, the broadening of contacts through enhanced mobility, improvement of personality and status, the automobile is probably the most demoralizing agency operating in present-day society. Certain students of society now refer to the automobile as a "house of prostitution on wheels." It has been largely credited with the disappearance of the house of ill-fame. The opportunity which it affords for an escape from one's social world, which contains the forces which control the life of the individual, explains to some extent, the personal demoralization which it produces.

#### HIDDEN NIGHT LIFE

To the superficial observer the Negro community of

<sup>1</sup>*The Unadjusted Girl*, p. 71.

Washington is minus that malign notoriety, or so-called social evil—"night life." But such impressions can only be held by persons who are very superficially acquainted with Negro life in this city. And even they should be made suspicious by the frequent remarks that, "\_\_\_\_ was a fine young fellow in Cincinnati, Detroit, and Cleveland, but when he came to Washington—I don't know—it just seemed that this night-life got the best of him."

The frequent recurrence of such remarks forced the investigator to reply: "What night-life are you talking about? I don't see any evidence of excessive night-life in Washington. There is no pronounced cabaret life such as is found in cities like Chicago, and New York." To this there always came the inevitable reply, "I know; you never see it. But it's here; it's hidden."

Investigations disclosed the fact that there is very little open organized night-life that is "above board." The efficient police system keeps a careful vigilance over all open objective forms of behavior. But in secret and hidden places it goes on as in other cities. So far as public cabaret and night-club life is concerned, Washington falls far below Chicago. But in "below board" activity it rivals closely the largest cosmopolitan centers. This secret night-life is not open to the general public. It embraces the activities of various private clubs and cliques, and is, in the light of our conventional moral attitudes, extremely anti-social and degenerate. It is not confined merely to the lower classes but embraces the higher cultural groups as well. Private parties given for the

entertainment of out-of-town guests in many instances become extremely orgiastic. The statement of a wealthy Negro from a western city who had visited the majority of the large cities of the world, which was to the effect that he had never seen "such debauchery, such drunkenness, and such extremes in dancing" as he witnessed in Washington while paying a short visit to some of his friends, may be somewhat of an exaggeration of the degree of demoralization to which Negro night-life in this city is carried. It does, however, involve a great many unconventional behaviorisms.

All secret, or hidden forms of association are likely to take on an extreme coloring, and are particularly inclined toward illicit sexual relations.

On many prominent streets and in the most highly-developed neighborhoods may be found houses which are rented and used specifically for the purpose of gambling and other questionable forms of conduct. Occasional night raids by the police bring to light bits of evidence of what is going on under cover.

The following card was handed to one of the investigators some time ago by a panderer, and is indicative of the nature of Washington's hidden night-life:

YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS ARE INVITED TO ENJOY  
*AN EVENING OF SPORT*  
With Georgia, Anna, and Dyke Mose  
Wednesday Evening April 10, 19—  
*At the High Tower*  
—Street N.W.  
Shrimp at the Piano  
ENTRE: *Have your fun*

## INFECTIVE ENVIRONMENTS OF NEGRO CHILDREN

The recreation and amusement activities of every social group tend to reflect certain social patterns which have developed out of the forms of social interaction which have taken place for a period of years. The psycho-social environment contains the sets of stimuli which condition the responses of those who live in it. In addition to the spontaneous stimuli which inevitably condition a vast number of social responses in the adjustment process, the psycho-social environment contains customs, traditions, folkways, mores, and other uniform patterns into conformity with which the behavior of individuals is irresistibly drawn. Those social environments which condition anti-social and pathological patterns of recreation contribute a large percentage of the delinquents. The anti-social conduct of juveniles is always modelled consciously or unconsciously after some social pattern which exists in their communities. Alcoholism, drug addiction, crap-shooting, sexual irregularity, etc., are all social habits or behavior sequences of such institutions as cheap cabarets and movie shows, unsupervised dance halls, and rowdy pool rooms.

In several of the thickly-settled Negro areas, there are no recreation centers and only a few small playgrounds which are available to Negro children. Swimming pools and bathing beaches, which are much needed in the summer time, are extremely limited for Negroes. Because of the lack of these well-ordered places of recreation and amusement, the cheap movie theater, dance

hall, and pool room thrive. Many of these establishments are notorious breeders of crime. There are in Washington certain neighborhoods in which reside a multitude of anti-social patterns which condition the responses of the members of these districts toward delinquency. The streets which furnish this characteristic type of environment are Six and one-half Street, DeFrees, Seaton, portions of Seventh Street, Franklin; certain streets in the Southwest, such as Four and one-half Street; and what is commonly known as "Foggy Bottom," situated between K Street and Virginia Avenue, New Hampshire Avenue and Twenty-Eighth Street, Northwest. It is in these districts that public opinion and the mores are extremely weak. These districts are frequently rendezvous to which persons from respectable neighborhoods resort for anti-social purposes. These districts have evolved distinct sets of folkways to accommodate and define the leisure-time activities of their inhabitants. These folkways have become coercive and dominate the social life of such cultural areas. As the result of suggestion and imitation the majority of persons living in the midst of the stimulation of such environments, especially the juveniles, adopt and use such patterns as models of their conduct.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>An excellent statement of the force of the folkways is presented in Wm. G. Sumner's *Folkways*, p. 64.

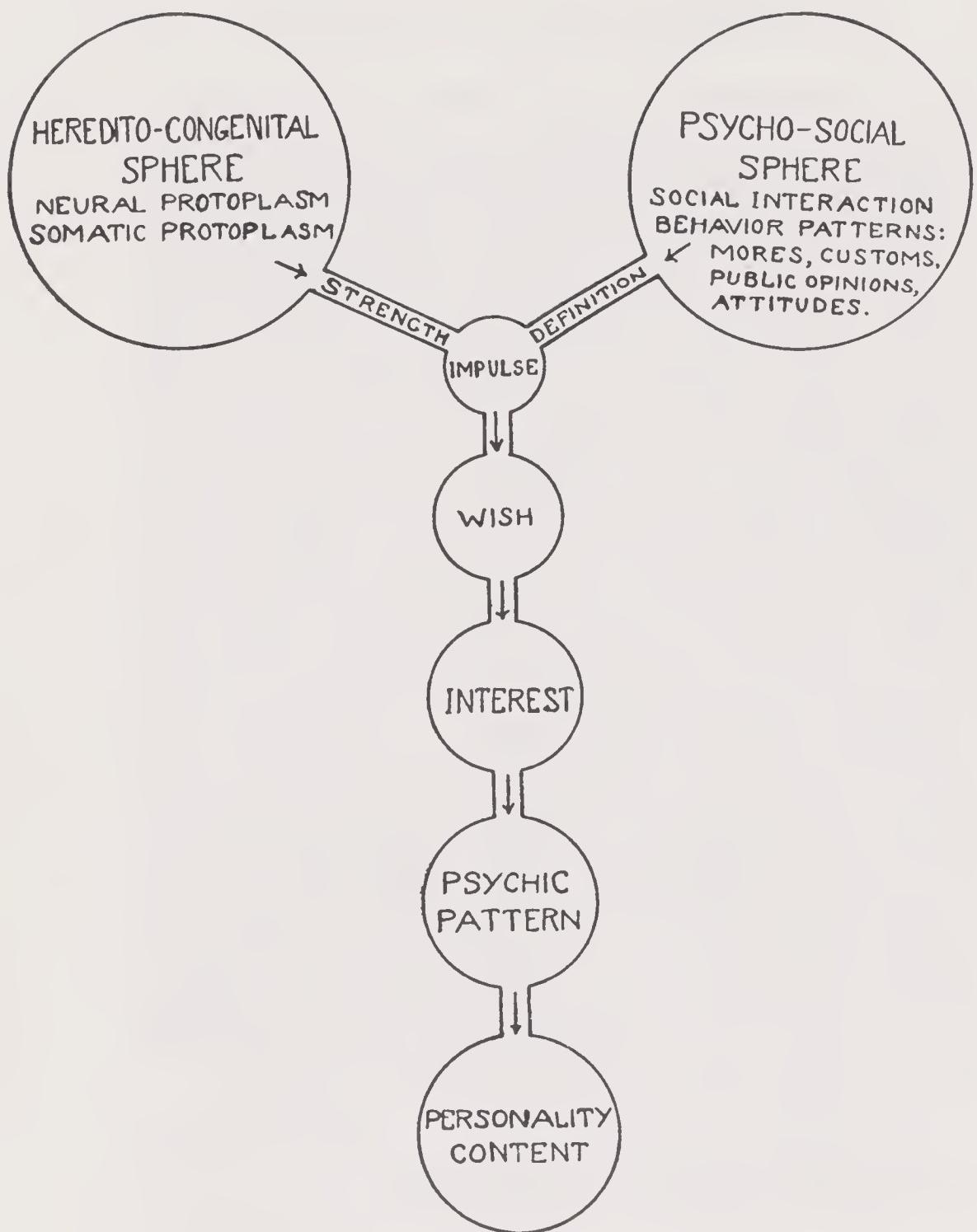


FIGURE II

## EXPLANATION OF FIGURE II

The figure on the opposite page attempts to illustrate the natural mechanism by which the psycho-social environment makes its imprint on human personality. This seems to be a law of the interaction of the human organism and the environment. The *impulse* which arises in the neural and somatic protoplasm, in response to a stimulus from the environment, is defined in accordance with the *behavior patterns* of the group, and is transformed into a characteristic type of reaction which the sociologist refers to as a *wish*. This reaction may be either positive or negative. If positive, the process may continue further and the *wish*, if permanent, is likely to change into an *interest*, which is more general and more permanent than the former. The interest, if continued, becomes a *psychic pattern* which is ultimately embodied in the *personality* as a permanent element of its content. Hence, the personality will inevitably reflect the character of the environment in which the individual's life is developed.

## THE CHILD AS AN ALLEY-DWELLER

The alley affords the child few, if any, wholesome patterns for leisure-time activity. The child in such an environment is confronted with few wholesome channels of expression. The forms of amusement witnessed by him from early childhood through adolescence consist of gambling, intoxication, illicit sexuality, idle lounging, and a few of the less harmful undirected forms of recreational activity. From such environments come scores of juvenile delinquents to burden the Juvenile Court, Juvenile Protective Association, Industrial Training Schools, and other social agencies which attempt to deal with the problems of social amelioration and personal disorganization.

One frequently hears from the alley people themselves such statements as: "This aint no place to bring up children in; no, Lawd, a child ought never be brought up in here. Might as well see them dead as to take them to live in an alley." Even the most vicious-minded adults who inhabit the alleys make such declarations without any hesitation, and the more self-respecting parents bewail their inability to support their families outside the alleys. One old woman who had spent more than forty years in the same alley said: "I have lived here long enough to know that you can't grow a good potato out of bad ground. Dis sho is bad ground."

The life of the alley is a-moral, not immoral. Marriage is rarely practiced, and more than one half of the children born in the alleys are illegitimate. Man is such

an insignificant and unstable element in alley life that he has practically no status, certainly not a superior status. Alley-dwellers who visit their friends in other alleys never make use of the man's name when inquiring about who lives in a house. It is always, "Is this Elsie Smith's house?" never, "Is this Lacy Smith's house?" Lacy does not have any house. Another common reference is to "the woman who has the rooms up over Sallie Kyle's house."

The alleys have a class of men whom the alley-people call "lovers." These are men who cannot find work, or, rather pretend that they cannot find work, and so accept the support of some of the alley women who give them money earned in housework or got from other sources. The man who has experienced continuous failure in seeking work and who is naturally attractive to women is especially inclined to accept the status of "a lover."

The following are a few of the phases of alley-life which the author either experienced or had related to him by alley-dwellers, and which furnish evidence of the unwholesome character of such environments:

On entering —— Court, the writer was greeted with the following salutation from a large, dark fellow who was sitting on the stoop of one of the houses: "Hello pardner!" When the writer made no reply, he repeated his salutation: "Hi pardner! How you coming?" "O. K.," was the reply. "Well then you jez O.K. out of here. We don't need your inspecting, we knows jez what we want to do in yere. If you're looking for moonshine, why I want to tell you we've got plenty of it here.

But I dare you to get any policeman down here after us." At this point there came a remark from a feminine voice from the doorway: "Jim, why dun you let dat man alone. You dun know who dat man is. He liable be a secret service man and 'rest you if you dun stop shooting off your big mouth." "Well, if he does, I sho going wrap my razor 'roun his neck."

In another alley the author was told the following story by a woman who was intimately acquainted with the life of its inhabitants:

"You know, Mary, the woman next door, died last night. The ambulance came and got her a little after midnight. Jim came home with the devil in him one night about a week ago, and something happened, nobody seems to know jez what it was, but he beat her unmercifully. No, Jim wasn't her husband, he jez her friend. Honey, dat's all any of dese women have. Well, anyhow, he jez beat that poor woman something terrible and she wasn't able to walk any more. So last night she died. All the neighbors say his beating her killed her. Mary was a good little woman, too. Jim has 'lit out.' "

Mr. Charles F. Weller in his book, *Neglected Neighbors*, records the following experience which tends to depict the natural characteristics of the life of the alley:

"One night a knock came at my bedroom door and a strange man wanted to find 'Mamie, the little black woman.' Sometimes several men who are interested in one woman come together. Perhaps they drink and gamble amicably for a time, but a quarrel and a fight may break forth suddenly. Then there are oaths,

blows and shots, and silent fighting with knives, while heavy feet tramp up and down the stairway and women shriek. The police are summoned and the crowd scatters wildly. Some bleeding black man climbs along the dizzy balcony which skirts the alley side of the building. He crashes over the tubs and pans on Mrs. Malcom's porch and bursts unceremoniously through her rooms to the horror of the frightened children. The little ones sit up in bed with wide open wondering eyes, shrinking at each new sound and forming memory-pictures of the lowest human depravity. Next morning they step over the trail of blood stains which leads down two flights of stairs to where the ambulance waited at the curbstone."<sup>1</sup>

Such are the forms of conduct to which the juvenile alley-dweller has to adjust himself. These receptive little children have their future determined by the evil sights and sounds of the alley-life. The new generation receives all the vices of the older generation and reacts with eager ears and wide-open eyes to the evil sights and sounds that, in an area so shut-in and isolated from the general life of the city must be common property. At one moment their attention is called to a fight, at another to an arrest, and when these intense forms of excitement are absent, they may be seen crowding in eager groups about the garage, machine shop, or in the stables among the horses where groups of men at work shout obscene messages to the women in the houses. Growing up in such an atmosphere, the child will reach, sooner or later, the point where the anti-social forces about him have grown too strong to be withstood,

<sup>1</sup>P. 130 (published 1909).

and he is eventually ruined by the demoralizing influences of such an environment.

The following list of alleys, which were visited by the writer, were found to contain a large number of children who were assimilating most unwholesome folkways:

Alexander Court, N.W., Twentieth and Twenty-first, K. and L Streets.

Balls Court, N.W., Second and Third, G and Massachusetts Avenue.

Blagdens Alley, N.W., Ninth and Tenth, M and N Streets.

Cooksey Place, N.W., First and Third, Q and R Streets.

Dingman Place, N.W., North Capitol and New Jersey Avenues, E and F Streets.

Goat Alley, N.W., Sixth and Seventh, L and M Streets.

Lee's Court, N.W., Nineteenth and Twentieth, K and L Streets.

Linger's Court, N.W., Nineteenth and Twentieth, L and M Streets.

Madison Alley, N.W., Seventh and Marion, P and Q Streets.

Naylor's Alley, N.W., Twentieth and Twenty-first, E and F Streets.

O'Briens Court, N.W., Twentieth and Twenty-first,  
E and F Streets.

Ricketts Court, N.W., Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth, E and F Streets.

Ridge Court, N.W., Fourth and Fifth, N and Ridge  
Streets.

St. Mary's Court, N.W., Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth, G and H Streets.

Snows Court, N.W., Twenty-first and Twenty-fifth,  
I and K Streets.



PART IV  
CONCLUSIONS.



## CONCLUSIONS

THE PROBLEMS which municipalized play presents to urban centers have brought about increased public recognition of recreation and amusement as fundamental and essential human activities which should be cared for by definite institutions on a level with other great institutions of civilization.

In the city, the routinized life, along with the mechanical and impersonal relationships, produce a great deal of social unrest and stress. Hence, the problem of relaxation and release from mental strain resulting from intense psychic and muscular application is presented. Relief seems to be found chiefly in the return to the old and more deeply-rooted racial habits. It has often been pointed out that democracy in its leveling process seems to be increasing leisure-time, without adequately providing for its conservation. Not only does this appear to be true, but the urbanization of the population is presenting further difficulties. The artificial environment it creates prevents normal instinctive development. Life means *action*, and unless provided for and directed this activity is in danger of running off into pathological and anti-social channels. Hence, one of the major problems of the modern city is that of the control and conservation of play, since it is most highly desirable that the

recreational side of life should be in conformity with the highest ideals.

The Negroes of Washington have their recreational and amusement life limited almost entirely to their own racial facilities and to contact with members of their own group.

Unlike such cities as Chicago, New York, Detroit, and Cleveland, the capital city maintains a more definite form of bi-racial organization. Here, the Negro group exists chiefly by the interaction of its members with themselves and not with members of white society. This is truer in the informal phases of life than it is in the more conventional aspects of association.

The effects which this has on the culture of the Negro group are subtle but none the less significant. It is in the recreational and amusement phases of life that the culture of the Negroes in Washington takes on a distinct coloring. Almost completely devoid of contacts with the white population in the purely social experiences, certain classes have developed a special interest in the art of socialization and entertainment.

The intellectuals who are not socially inclined realize in no small sense the incompleteness of the amusement and recreational sides of Negro life in the National Capital. They are prohibited from seeing the best actors and actresses who play at the downtown theaters and from hearing the best lectures and musicals, because Negroes are usually not admitted. As a result, there has developed more than a normal interest in the photoplays which

appear to constitute the highest form of public amusement for the Negro group. Hence, the two leading movie houses, the Lincoln and the Republic, both located on You Street near Fourteenth Street, operate successfully during the entire year.

The radio is to a certain extent bridging over the barrier of cultural isolation which has existed for a number of years between the two races here in Washington.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

After a careful consideration of the facts which this survey brought to light, the author is convinced that certain recommendations should be made relating to the improvement of the leisure-time phases of Negro social life in Washington. These recommendations are not made to any definite agencies or institutions. They are directed, rather, at the public mind in general, with the hope that they might eventually exercise some influence upon public opinion, from which all successful social change really emanates. These recommendations are made in the light of the basic facts involved in race relations, and a bi-racial form of social organization. A thoughtful reading of the facts in the text should precede the readers consideration of these recommendations.

### IT IS RECOMMENDED:

1. That the rigid barriers against Negro attendance at the leading theaters and other public institutions in the downtown district be removed. This gross discrimination by white persons practically excludes Negroes entirely from certain higher forms of the city's cultural life. Too rigid a policy of exclusion is inimical to the development of that mutual sympathy and understanding which may lead to harmony and coöperation.

2. That one or two of the thickly populated alleys in the section bounded by Pennsylvania Avenue and E Street, Rock Creek and Twenty-second Street, be destroyed and the space converted into well-equipped municipal playgrounds.
3. That the bathing beaches for Negroes, which are to be established in the near future by the Federal Government be not located in thickly-populated Negro areas. The location of such centers in these districts would tend to destroy their social solidarity as a result of the infusion of scores of outsiders who would not regard themselves as members of the community and who would, therefore, demoralize the life of such areas. If these beaches should be located in progressive Negro communities, they would draw into such districts a floating irresponsible element of the population. If they are established in the less progressive Negro communities, the higher classes will not use them. From a sociological point of view, Anacostia, D.C., would be a desirable location for a bathing beach for Negroes.
4. That the Willow Tree Playground be equipped with a swimming pool.
5. That cultured Negroes seek to maintain higher standards in connection with their leisure-time activities by practicing more of the milder forms of social exclusion. Standards can only be maintained through the development of social classes. These standards should have as their basis moral and cultural attainments rather than distinctions of color. Strong group opinion and

sentiment should be developed to combat the encroachments of vulgar anti-social forms of behavior upon the activities of the more highly-cultured groups.

6. That white amusement and recreational centers, from which Negroes are rigidly excluded, be not permitted to be established in typical Negro areas. Investigation shows that in Washington, and also in other cities, such conditions make for the demoralization of the Negro neighborhood. The white people who frequent these centers often find themselves in a community, the public opinion of which they are inclined to ignore. In such cases their conduct tends to become anti-social. The behavior of white people who come into Negro neighborhoods for recreational purposes tends toward demoralization. This lowers the moral tone of such Negro neighborhoods.

7. That the exclusive white bathing beaches, playgrounds, etc., now located in the midst of thickly populated Negro districts be either abolished or turned over to Negroes. That the Scapa Flow bathing beach, situated on Georgia Avenue, near W Street, be either closed or turned over to Negroes. This action could be justified not only on account of its demoralizing influence upon the life of the community, but also on account of the growing resentment on the part of Negroes toward its location in a typical Negro area. The writer has observed one or two incidents which took place in connection with this beach which might have easily marked the beginning of a race riot.

8. That Negroes establish a baseball park and encourage professional baseball. This suggestion does not imply that they lose their interest in the American League teams, or cease to attend these games in large numbers.
9. That the management of theaters for Negroes attempt to secure more frequently high-class theatrical companies.
10. That a theater corporation composed of well-to-do Negroes be organized to foster a first-class playhouse for the Negro population of this city.
11. That forums and pageantry be encouraged by the various social institutions.
12. That the police promptly rid the Negro residential area of vice resorts and other vicious centers.

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